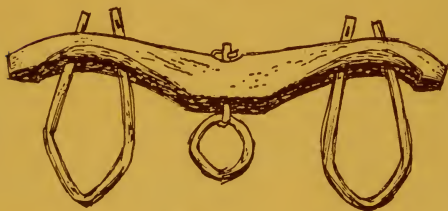


The Lincoln Stories

Honoré Morrow

LINCOLN ROOM

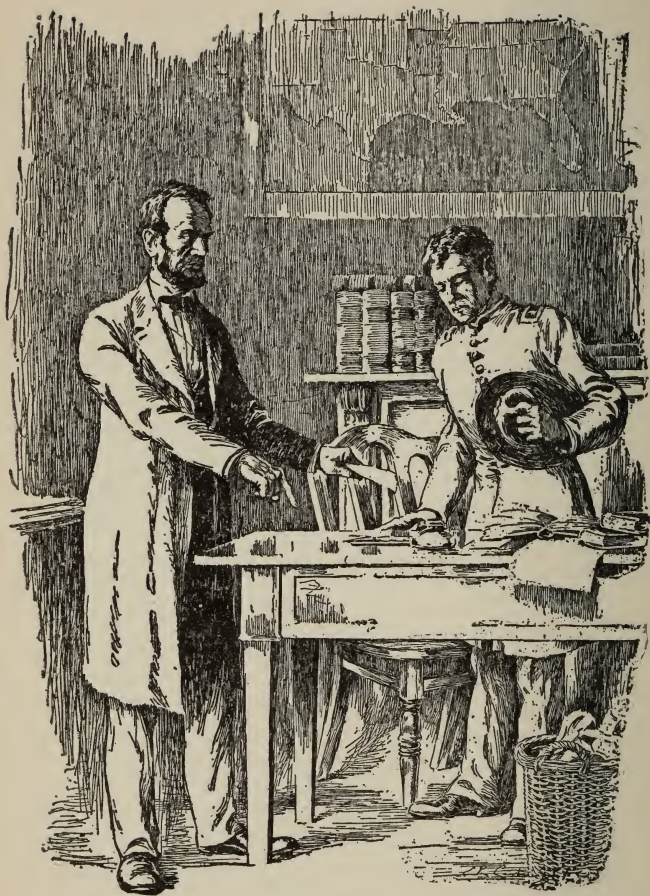
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THE
LINCOLN STORIES
OF
HONORÉ MORROW



"COME HERE AND SIT DOWN AND WRITE A LETTER
TO YOUR MOTHER!"—Page 74.

The LINCOLN STORIES

OF
HONORÉ MORROW

Containing BENEFITS FORGOT,
DEARER THAN ALL *and*
THE LOST SPEECH OF
ABRAHAM LINCOLN. *Illustrated*
by CHARLES E. CARTWRIGHT



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BENEFITS FORGOT

*A STORY OF LINCOLN AND
MOTHER LOVE*

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I
THE DONATION PARTY



I THE DONATION PARTY

BROTHER MEAKER rose from his pew and looked at Jason appraisingly.

“I don’t know, brethern,” he said. “Of course, he’s a growing boy. Just turned twelve, didn’t you say, ma’am?” Jason’s mother nodded faintly without looking up, and Brother Meaker went on. “As I said, he’s a growing boy, but he’s dark and wiry. And I’ve always noted, the dark wiry kind

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eat smaller than any other kind. I should take at least twelve pounds of sugar off the allowance for the year and four gallon less of molasses than you was calculatin' on."

He sat down and Sister Cantwell rose. She was a fat woman, famous in the southern Ohio country for the lavish table she set.

"Short sweetening," she said in a thin high voice, "is dreadful high. I said to Hiram yesterday that the last sugar loaf I bought was worth its weight in silver. I should say, cut down on short sweetening. Long sweetening is all right except for holidays."

Jason whispered to his mother, "What's long sweetening, mother?"

"They must mean molasses," she whispered in return, with a glance at Jason's father, who sat at the far end of the pew reading his Bible as he always did at this annual ordeal.

Jason looked from his mother's quiet, sensitive face, like yet so unlike his own, to the bare pulpit of the little country

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church, then back at Brother Ames, who was conducting the meeting. This annual conference and the annual donation party were the black spots in Jason's year. His mother, he suspected, suffered as he did: her face told him that. Her tender lips, usually so wistful and eager, were at these times thin and compressed. Her brown eyes, that except at times of death or illness always held a remote twinkle, were inscrutable.

Jason's face was so like, yet already so unlike his mother's! The same brown eyes, with the same twinkle, but tonight instead of being inscrutable, boyishly hard. The same tender mouth, with tonight an unboyish sardonic twist. What Jason's father's face might have said one could not know, for it was hidden under a close-cropped brown beard. He turned the leaves of his Bible composedly, looking up only as the meeting reached a final triumphant conclusion with Brother Ames' announcement:

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“So, Brother Wilkins, there you are, a liberal allowance if I must say it. Two hundred and fifty dollars for the year, with the usual donation party to take place in the fall of the year.”

Brother Wilkins, who was Jason's father, rose, bowed and said: “I thank you, brethren. Let us pray!”

The fifty or sixty souls in the church knelt, and Jason's father, his eyes closed, lifted his great bass voice in prayer:

“O God, You have led our feeble and trusting steps to this town of High Hill, Ohio. You have put into the hearts and minds of these people, O God, the purpose of feeding and clothing us. Whether they do it well or ill, concerns them and you, O God, and not us. We are but Your humble servants, doing Your divine bidding. Yet this is perhaps the proper occasion, Our Heavenly Father, to thank You that You have sent us but one child and that unlike Solomon, Your servant

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has but one wife. And now, O God, bless these people in their giving. And make me, in my solitary circuit riding in the hills and valleys a proper mouthpiece of Your will. For Lord Jesus' sake, Amen."

There was a short pause after the rich voice stopped, then a few weak "Amens" came from different corners of the church and Brother Ames, jumping to his feet, exclaimed:

"Let us close the meeting by singing

'How tedious and tasteless the hours
When Jesus no longer I see —' "

This ended Jason's first day at High Hill. The salary was small, even for a Methodist circuit rider, in the decade before the Civil War. It was smaller by fifty dollars than what they had been allowed the year before. Yet, High Hill, as Mrs. Wilkins pointed out to Jason the next day, was much more attractive than any town they had been in for years. There was a good school, and the Ohio river-packet stopped twice a week, and

a Mr. Inchpin in the town was reported to be the owner of a number of books. Jason's mother was an Eastern woman and sometimes the loneliness and hardship of her life made her find solace in what seemed to Jason inconsequential things. Still, he was glad of the school, for he was a first-class student and already had decided to take his father's and mother's advice that he study medicine. And the packet, warping in twice a week, was, after all, something to which one might look forward and Mr. Inchpin's books would be wonderful.

Jason was sure that the Ohio valley in which he had spent the whole of his short life was the most beautiful spot in the world. The lovely green heights rolling back into the Kentucky sky line, were, he thought, great enough for David, whose cattle fed upon a thousand hills. The fine headlands on the Ohio side, wooded, mysterious, were, he was sure, clad in verdure like the utmost bound of the everlasting hills of Jacob. And High

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Hill with its fifteen hundred souls was "a city, builded on a hill that could not be laid."

For Jason was brought up on the Bible. His father believed that it ought to be, outside of his school text books, his only literature. His mother, with her Eastern traditions, thought otherwise. A Methodist circuit rider before the Civil War moved every year, and every year Mrs. Wilkins combed each new community for books. It was wonderful how she and Jason scented them out.

They had been in High Hill about a week when Jason came panting into the house late one afternoon. His father was writing a sermon in the sitting room. Jason tip-toed into the kitchen, where his mother was preparing supper.

"The packet's in, mother, and I carried a man's carpet bag up to the hotel and look — what he gave me!"

His slender boyish brown hands fairly trembled as he held a torn and soiled maga-

zine toward his mother. She dropped the biscuit she was molding and seized it.

"*Harper's Monthly!* O Jason dear, how wonderful! You shall read it aloud to me after supper."

"It's prayer meeting night," said Jason in a sick voice.

His mother flushed a little. "So it is! My goodness, Jason! Print makes a heathen of me and you're most as bad. You haven't fed the horse or milked."

"So I won't get a look at it till tomorrow," cried Jason, bitterly.

Mrs. Wilkins glanced toward the closed door that led into the sitting room. Then she looked at Jason's wide brown eyes, at the round-about she had cut over from his father's old sermon coat, at the darned stockings and the trousers that had belonged to the rich boy of the town they had lived in the year before.

"Jason," she said, "you ought to get

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plenty of sleep because you're a growing boy. But a thing like this won't happen for years again — and — well, I've saved up several candle ends, hoping to get some sewing done nights when your father was using the lamp. When you go up to bed tonight, take those and read your magazine."

"But you ought to keep them," protested Jason.

"Not at all," exclaimed his mother, vigorously, "it's all for your education. Run along now and milk."

So Jason reveled in his *Harper's Monthly*, and the next day as he wiped the dishes for his mother, he produced his great idea.

"If I can earn the money, this summer, mother, can I subscribe to *Harper's Monthly* for a year?"

"My goodness, Jason, it's five dollars and this is the first of August! School begins in a month."

"I know all that," replied Jason impa-

tiently, "but if I earn the money can I have it for *Harper's Monthly*?"

"Of course you can. It's all for your education, my dear. I never forget that."

A money paying job for a boy of twelve was a hard thing to find in High Hill and Jason was late for supper that night. But his brown eyes were shining with triumph when he slid into his seat and held out his bowl for his evening meal of mush and milk.

"I've got a job," he said.

"A job?" queried his father. He smiled a little at Jason's mother.

"Yes, sir. Mr. Inchpin is having a new barn built on the hill back of his house. The brook runs at the foot of it and I'm going to haul gravel and sand and water up to the building site. It'll take about a month. He provides the horse and wagon."

"And how much will he pay you?" asked Mrs. Wilkins.

THE DONATION PARTY

"He says he can't tell till he's through. But I'm going to ask him for five dollars."

Jason's father looked amused and a little troubled. "Jason, I hope you're not too interested in Mammon. But I must say I'm glad to see you have your mother's energy."

"Or your father's," said Mrs. Wilkins, smiling into the blue eyes opposite hers. "Nobody can say that a circuit rider lacks energy."

And so during the hot August days, Jason toiled on Mr. Inchpin's new barn, never once visiting the swimming hole in the brook, never once heeding the long-drawn invitation of the cicada to loll under the trees with one of Mr. Inchpin's books, never once breaking away when the toot of the packet reverberated among the hills.

"He's a fine lad," Mr. Inchpin told Jason's father. "I never have seen such determination in a little fellow."

Brother Wilkins looked gratified, but when he repeated the little compliment to Jason's mother he added, "I don't believe I understand Jason altogether."

"I do," said Mrs. Wilkins, stoutly.

August came to an end with cool nights and shorter days and Mr. Inchpin's barn was finished of a Saturday evening. He called Jason into the house, into the library where there were bound volumes of *Godey's Lady's Book* and *Blackwood*, and handed him three paper dollars.

"There you are, my man. I'd intended to give you only two. But you've done well, by ginger, so here's three dollars."

Jason looked up at him dumbly, mumbled something, stuffed the bills into his trousers pocket and bolted for home. He burst in on his mother in the kitchen, buried his face against her bosom and sobbed.

"I can't have it after all! He only gave me three dollars! I can't have it! And now

THE DONATION PARTY

I'll never know how that story 'Bleak House' ended."

Jason's father came into the kitchen, hastily: "What in the world —"

"Jason! Jason! don't sob so!" cried Mrs. Wilkins. "We'll raise the rest of the money some way. I'll find it. Hush, dear, hush! Mercy, the mush is burning!"

Jason's father took the boy's grimy blistered hand, such a strong slender hand and so like his mother's, and sitting down in the kitchen chair, he pulled Jason to him.

"Tell me, Jason," he urged gently, "what money?"

Jason still torn with occasional sobs, managed to tell the story.

"*Harper's Monthly*," exclaimed Brother Wilkins. "Dear! Dear! I had hoped you'd give the money to a foreign mission, Jason."

"Foreign mission!" cried Jason's mother. "Well, I guess not! Jason's education is

going to be taken care of before the heathen."

"But how'll we get the extra dollars?" asked Brother Wilkins, helplessly.

"I'll manage," replied Jason's mother, her gentle voice a little louder than usual.

"Then let us eat supper," said Jason's father, clearing his throat for grace.

Jason's mother sold a girlhood treasure, a little silver-tipped hair-pin, to the storekeeper's wife, the following Monday, for two dollars, and the jubilant Jason exchanged the single bills for a single note. The note was cut in two and sent in separate letters to New York, this being the before the war method of safeguarding loss of money in the mail. There was a period of several weeks of waiting during which Jason met every mail. Then a third letter was sent by Jason's mother, asking why the delay, and telling Jason's little story.

Jason met the return packet, his heart now

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high, now low. He had met so many futile packets since the first of September. But this time there was a letter explaining that but one-half of the note had arrived in New York, but that on faith, the editors were sending the back numbers of the magazine requested and that the rest of the year's subscription would follow. And Jason never did know whether or not the second half of the note arrived.

And there they were, a fat pile of magazines! Jason clasped them in his arms and rushed home with them. A tag tail of boys followed him and by nightfall most of the town knew that Jason Wilkins had four numbers of *Harper's Monthly* on hand.

Jason was out milking the cow when Mr. Inchpin arrived.

"Heard Jason had some new magazines in hand. Don't s'pose you could lend me a few, over night?"

Jason's mother was in the kitchen. It was

donation party night and she had been cooking all day in preparation.

"Surely, surely," said Jason's father, picking up the pile of magazines. "Jason can't get at them before the end of the week. Take them and welcome."

Mr. Inchpin rode away. Jason came in with the milk pail and the family sat down to a hasty supper.

"Won't I have a minute of time to look at my magazines, mother?" asked Jason. "O, I hate donation parties!"

"Jason!" thundered his father. "Would you show ingratitude to God? And the books are not here anyway. I loaned them to Mr. Inchpin."

"Father!"

"O Ethan!"

Brother Wilkins' eyes were steel gray, instead of blue. "Jason can read his Bible until the end of the week. His ingratitude deserves punishment."

Jason rushed from the table and flung himself sobbing into the hay loft. His mother found him there a few moments later.

"I know, dear! I know! It's hard. But father doesn't love books as you and I do, so he doesn't understand. And you must hurry and get ready for the party."

"I don't want the donation party, I want my magazines," sobbed Jason.

"I know. But life seldom, so very seldom, gives us what we want, dear heart. Just be thankful that you will be happy at the end of the week and come and help mother with the party."

As donation parties go, this one was a huge success. Fully a hundred people attended it. They played games, they sang hymns, they ate a month's provisions and Mrs. Wilkins' chance of a new dress in the cake and coffee she provided. They left behind them a pile of potatoes and apples that filled two barrels and a heap of old clothing that

Jason, candle in hand, turned over with his foot.

“There’s Billy Ames’ striped pants,” he grumbled. “Every time his mother licked him into wearing ’em, I know he prayed I’d get ’em, the ugly beasts, and I have. And there’s seven old patched shirts. I suppose I’ll get the tails sewed together into school shirts for me and there’s Old Mrs. Arley’s plush dress — I suppose poor mother’ll have to fix that up and wear it to church. Why don’t they give stuff father’ll have to wear, too? I wonder why a minister’s supposed to be so much better than his wife or son.”

“What’s that you’re saying, Jason?” asked his father sharply as he brought the little oil lamp from the sitting room into the kitchen. Mrs. Wilkins followed. This was a detestable job, the sorting of the donation debris, and was best gotten through with, at once. Jason, shading the candle light from his eyes,

with one slender hand, looked at his father belligerently.

"I was saying," he said, "that it was too bad you don't have to wear some of the old rags sometimes, then you'd know how mother and I feel about donation parties."

There was absolute silence for a moment in the little kitchen. A late October cricket chirped somewhere.

Then, "O Jason!" gasped his mother.

The boy was only twelve, but he had been bored in a difficult school and was old for his years. He looked again at the heaps of cast-off clothing on the floor and his gorge rose within him.

"I tell you," he cried, before his father could speak, "that I'll never wear another donation party pair of pants. No, nor a shirt-tail shirt, either. I'm through with having the boys make fun of me. I'll earn my own clothes every summer and I'll earn mother's too."

"You'll do nothing of the sort, sir," thundered Jason's father, his great bass voice rising as it did in revival meetings. "You'll do nothing but wear donation clothes as long as you're under my roof. I've long noted your tendency to vanity and mammon. To my prayers, I shall begin to add stout measures."

Jason threw back his head, a finely shaped head it was with good breadth between the eyes.

"I tell you, sir, I'm through with donation pants. If folks don't think enough of the religion you preach to pay you for it I'd — I'd advise you to get another religion."

Under his beard, Ethan Wilkins went white, but not so white as Jason's mother. But she spoke quietly.

"Jason, apologize to your father at once."

"I couldn't accept an apology now," said the minister. "I shall have to pray to get my mind into shape. In the meantime Jason shall be punished for this. Not until every-

one in the town who desires to read his *Harper's Monthlies* has done so, can Jason touch them."

"O father, not that," cried Jason. "I'll apologize! I'll wear the pants! Why, it would be Christmas before I'd see them again!"

"I can't accept your apology now. Neither your spirit nor mine is right. And I cannot retract. Your punishment must stand."

Jason was all child now. "Mother," he cried, "don't let him! Don't let him!"

Mrs. Wilkins' lips quivered. For a moment she could not speak. Then with an inscrutable look into her husband's eyes she said:

"You must obey your father, Jason. You have been very wicked."

Jason put down his candle and sobbed. "I know it. But I'll be good. Let me have my magazines. They're mine. I paid for them."

"No!" roared the minister. "Go to bed,

sir, and see to it that you pray for a better heart."

Jason's sobs sounded through the little house long after his father and mother had gone to bed. The minister sighed and turned restlessly.

"Why was I given such a rebellious son, do you suppose?" he asked finally.

"Perhaps God hopes it'll make you have a better understanding of children," replied Mrs. Wilkins. "Christ said that unless you became like one of them you could not enter the kingdom."

There was another silence with Jason's sobs growing fainter, then, "But he was wicked, Mary, and he deserved punishment."

"But not such a punishment. Of course, I had to support you, no matter what I thought. But O Ethan, Ethan, it's so easy to kill the fineness in a proud and sensitive heart like Jason's."

"Nevertheless," returned the minister,

THE DONATION PARTY

“when he spurns the giving hand of God, forgiveness is God’s, not mine. We’ll discuss it no more.”

Nor was the matter discussed again. Jason appeared at breakfast, with dark rings about his eyes, after having done his chores, as usual. Once, it seemed to his mother that he looked at her with a gaze half wondering, half hurt, as if she had failed him when his trust and need had been greatest. But he said nothing and she hoped that her mind had suggested what was in her aching heart and that Jason’s was only a child’s hurt that would soon heal.

He never again asked for the magazines. On Christmas morning his father placed them, tattered and marred, from their many lendings, beside his plate. Jason did not take them when he left the table and later on his mother carried them up to his room. Whether he read them or not, she did not know. But she was glad to see him begin

again to watch for the packet and read the current numbers as they arrived.

She dyed Billy Ames' striped pants in walnut juice and they really looked very well. Jason wore them without comment as he did the shirts she fashioned for him from many shirt tails.

And in the spring they left High Hill for a valley town.



II
THE CIRCUIT RIDER



II THE CIRCUIT RIDER

THE years sped on with unbelievable swiftness as they are very prone to do after the corner into the teens is turned.

Jason worked every summer, but he did not offer to buy his mother a dress nor did

he buy himself either clothing or books. He put all he earned by toward his course in medicine. When he was a little fellow, his mother had given him a lacquered sewing box that had belonged to her French mother. It had proved an admirable treasure box for childish hoardings. Jason, the summer he was thirteen, cleared it out and put into it **his** summer earnings, ten dollars.

With his newly acquired reticence, he did not speak of the box, nor did he mention the extra bills, quarters and dollars that appeared there from time to time. The little hoard grew slowly, very slowly, in spite of these anonymous additions — it grew as slowly as the years sped rapidly, it seemed to Jason's mother.

Jason must have been sixteen, the summer he went with his father on one of the Sunday circuit trips. He never had been on one before. But it had been decided that he was to begin his medical studies in the fall. He was

to be apprenticed to a doctor in Baltimore and his mother was anxious for father and son to draw together if possible before the son went into the world. Not that Jason and the minister quarreled. But there never had been the understanding between the two that except for the unfortunate magazine episode, always had existed between Jason and his mother.

The trip lay in the hills of West Virginia. Brother Wilkins rode his old horse, Charley, a handsome gray. Jason rode an old brown mare, borrowed from a parishioner for the trip.

Mrs. Wilkins, standing in the door, watched the two ride off together with a thrill of pride. Jason was almost as tall in the saddle as his father. He had shot up amazingly of late. The minister was getting very gray. He had been late in his thirties when he married. But he sat a horse as though bred to the saddle and Old Charley was a beauty.

Brother Wilkins was very fond of horses and was a good judge of horse flesh. Sometimes Mrs. Wilkins had thought, that if Ethan had not chosen to be a Methodist minister he would have made a first-class country squire.

She watched the two out of sight down the valley road, then with a little sigh turned back to the empty home.

Jason, though always a little self-conscious when alone with his father, was delighted with the idea of the trip. They crossed the Ohio on the ferry and rode rapidly into the West Virginia hills. The minister made a great effort to be entertaining and Jason was astonished at his father's intimate knowledge of the countryside.

"I don't see how you remember all the places, father," he said at noon, when the minister had turned to a side road to find a farmer whom he wished to greet.

"I had this circuit years ago before you

were born, my boy. I know the people intimately."

"Don't you get tired of it?" asked Jason, suddenly.

"Tired of saving souls?" returned his father. "Do you think you'll ever get tired of saving bodies?"

"O that's different," answered the boy. "You've got something to take hold of, with a body."

"And the body ceases to exist when the soul departs. Never forget that, my boy."

"But you work so hard," insisted Jason, "and you get so little for it. I don't mean money alone," flushing as if at some memory, "but it doesn't seem as if the people care. They'll take all they can get out of each minister as he comes along, and then forget him."

Brother Wilkins looked at Jason, thoughtfully. "Sixteen is very young, Jason. I'm afraid you were born carnal minded. I pray every night of my life that as you grow older,

you'll grow toward Christ and not away from Him."

Again Jason flushed uncomfortably and a silence fell that lasted until they reached the remote hill settlement where service was to be held that night. The settlement consisted of a log church, surrounded by a scattered handful of log houses, each already with its tiny glow of light, for night comes early in the hills. The two had eaten a cold lunch in the saddles, for church service would begin as soon as they arrived.

There were twenty-five or thirty people in the rough little church. They crowded round Brother Wilkins enthusiastically when he entered and he called them all by name as he shook hands with them. Jason slid into a back seat. His father mounted to the pulpit.

"Let us open by singing

'How tedious and tasteless the hours
When Jesus no longer I see—' "

The old familiar tune! Jason wondered

how many meetings his father had opened with it. The audience sang it with a will. In fact with too much will. A group of young men on the rear seat opposite Jason sang with unnecessary fervor, quite drowning out the female voices in the congregation. Jason saw his father, his face heavily shadowed in the candle-light, glance askance at the rear seat.

“Let us pray,” said Brother Wilkins. There was a rustle as the congregation knelt. “O God, I have come to You again in this mountain place after many years and many wanderings. I thank You for giving me this privilege. I have greeted old friends who have not forgotten me and who all these years have remembered You and Christ, Your only begotten Son. Tonight, O Heavenly Father, I have brought with me to this sacred fold my own one lamb that he might see how sacred and how great is Your power. Look on him tonight, O Supreme Master, and mark

him for Your own. And remember, that if the young men in the rear seat plan any disturbance tonight, O Heavenly Father, that the arm of Thy priest is strong and the soul of Thy servant is resolute. For Jesus Christ's sake, Amen."

The boom of "Amens" from the back seat was tremendous. Brother Wilkins, rising after his prayer, looked at the four young men for a long moment, over his glasses. Then he said:

"Let us sing

'From Greenland's icy mountains
To India's coral strands.'"

This was sung with tremendous vim, and the minister began his sermon. Jason's father was a good preacher. His vocabulary was rich and his ideas those of a thinking man whose religion was a passion. But the young men on the rear seat were unimpressed. One of them snored. Brother Wilkins stopped his sermon.

"Be silent, ye sons of Satan," he thundered. There was silence and he took up the thread of his talk. A low cat call interrupted him. The minister stopped and slipped off his coat, folding it carefully as he laid it on his desk. It was old and the seams would not stand strain. He rolled up his cuffs as he descended from the pulpit, the congregation watching him spell-bound. Jason had seen his father in action before and was deeply embarrassed but not surprised.

Brother Wilkins strode up to the pew where the offenders sat and seized by the ear the largest of the group, a hulk of twenty-one or so, larger than the minister. He led the young man into the aisle and reached up and boxed his ears, with the sound of impact of a club on an empty barrel.

"Now leave this house of God," roared the minister. The young fellow sneaked out the door. Brother Wilkins turned back to the pew.

"Don't you tech me or I'll brain ye," cried the youth who was about Brother Wilkins' own size.

"Hah!" snorted the minister. There was the sound of blows, a quick scuffling of feet and the second offender was booted out of the door. The remaining two made a quick and unassisted exit. Breathing a little heavily, Brother Wilkins returned to his sermon; and to his hypnotized and immensely regaled congregation it seemed that the rest of his preaching was as from one inspired by God.

Jason sat brooding deeply. Something within him revolted at the spectacle of his father descending from the pulpit to beat recalcitrant members of his congregation. An old and familiar sense of shame enveloped him, and he was thankful when once again darkness had enveloped them and they were traveling rapidly along the mountain road. They were to have a late supper and spend

the night at a cabin well along the road they must travel on the morrow.

Brother Wilkins was in the abstracted state that always followed his preaching and Jason was glad to respect his silence, until it had lasted so long that he became uneasy.

“Father, didn’t you say that Herd’s was five miles beyond the church?”

The minister pulled up his horse. In the darkness Jason could barely see the outlines of his body.

“Heavens, Jason! Why didn’t you rouse me sooner? This isn’t the main traveled road. When did we leave it?”

“I don’t know, sir. I thought you knew this part of the country so well—”

“So I do, ordinarily. But I can’t recognize by-paths on a night like this. Wait, isn’t that a light up the mountainside yonder? Come along, my boy, we’ll find out where we are.”

The light glowed only faintly from the open

door of a cabin. An old woman, with a pipe in her mouth, sat crooning over a little fire in the crude fireplace. She looked up in astonishment when the two appeared in the doorway.

“Why, it’s Brother Wilkins!” she cackled. “Lord’s sake, what you doin’ clar up hyar!”

“Why, Sister Clark! I am glad to see you,” exclaimed Jason’s father, shaking one of the old woman’s hands, and shouting into her other, which she cupped round her ear. “My son and I must have got off the main road five miles back. We’re on our way to Milton.”

Sister Clark was visibly excited. “Ye ain’t going on a step tonight. I can fix a shake-down for ye. Thing like this don’t happen to a lone old woman twice in a lifetime. Bring in your saddle-bags — but Lord!” she stopped aghast. “I ain’t got a bit of pork in the house, nor there ain’t a chicken on the place. All I got is corn-meal and molasses.”

“Plenty, Sister Clark! Plenty! Get the

saddle-bags, Jason, and tie the horses to graze."

They ate their supper by candle-light after their hostess had cooked the mush in a kettle hanging from the crane. Brother Wilkins had a violent choking fit during the meal and Sister Clark pounded him on the back, apologizing as she did so for her familiarity with the minister.

Jason slept profoundly on his share of the shake-down that night, and at dawn, after more mush, they were up and away.

Twice on this day, Sunday, Brother Wilkins held service in the mountains and it was nine o'clock at night when they started toward the Ohio again. It was not until they had reached the river at dawn and had roused the ferryman that the minister recovered from his Sunday abstraction.

"Did you have a pleasant trip, Jason?" he asked as they led the horses into the boat.

"Yes, father," answered Jason dutifully.

Brother Wilkins looked at the boy, as if he were beholding him from a new angle.

“You don’t look as much like your dear mother as you did in your childhood, my boy. Sometimes — I wonder — Jason, do you think this life has been too hard on your mother?”

“Yes, sir, I do. It’s hard on a boy, why shouldn’t it be doubly hard on a woman?”

The minister sighed. “Your reply is hardly polite, Jason, though I suppose my question merited it.” Then with sudden heat: “Never mistake this cold frankness of yours for courage, my son. It takes more courage usually to be courteous than to be impolite. Did you notice that I coughed violently yesterday evening at Sister Clark’s?”

“Yes, sir.”

“Well, the cause of it was this. She went down to the spring and fetched a pail of water for the mush. When I was eating my helping, I felt a lump in my mouth. But the old lady had her eye on me every minute for

fear I wouldn't enjoy the frugal meal, so I could only investigate with my tongue. I found that she had cooked a little bit of a frog in the mush. Now, Jason, if she had discovered that she never would have recovered from the mortification. The only time in her life the minister stopped with her. So, though it made me choke, I swallowed it. That, sir, is my idea of courtesy. I wish you not to forget it."

Jason's cool, speculative young gaze was on his father's face as he answered:

"I understand, father."

The minister turned away. "No, you don't. I doubt if you ever do." And he did not speak again until they reached home.



III
W A R



III

WAR

AND so Jason went away to study medicine. He worked very hard and progressed very rapidly. By the time he was twenty he was no longer "the doctor's boy." He was a real assistant in all but fees. He had no share in the doctor's income and always was desperately hard up.

At first, he did not ask his father and mother for help. He did all sorts of odd chores to pay his way. But as he progressed in his profession, he had less and less time for earning his up-keep and had finally to write home for money. His mother always answered his letters and she never failed to send him money when he asked for it. How she managed it, Jason never asked. Perhaps he was ashamed to know.

In all these four years he did not come home. He would have liked to but the trip was prohibitively expensive.

Late in the fall of 1861, he received a letter from his mother containing a ten-dollar bill. It was a short letter. "Your father can't live more than a week. Come at once."

Jason put his head down on that letter and sobbed, then dried his eyes and sought the doctor, who loaned him the rest of the money needed for the trip.

The minister's circuit had swung him round

again to High Hill. Jason disembarked from the packet late one November afternoon, carrying his carpet bag. Even in November, High Hill was beautiful. Through his sadness, Jason again felt the thrill of the giant headlands, the thousand hills of his boyish imaginings.

There was the same little cottage, more weather-beaten than he had remembered it. His mother was waiting for him at the door. The four years had changed her, yet she seemed to Jason more beautiful than his mental picture of her had been.

She kissed him with trembling lips. "He's still with us," she whispered. "I'm sure he waited for you."

"What is the matter with him?" asked Jason, huskily, as he deposited his carpet bag on the sitting-room table.

"Lung fever. He took a bad cold a month ago coming home from West Virginia in the rain. He was absent-minded, you know. If

it hadn't been for Pilgrim, I don't think he'd ever got here."

"Pilgrim?" asked Jason, warming his hands at the fire.

"Surely I've written you about Pilgrim. Father bought him soon after you left. He's the wisest horse that ever lived. If you're warm, now, Jason, come to your father."

He followed her into the bedroom which opened off the kitchen. His father lay on the feather bed, his eyes closed. O how worn — O how changed! Young Jason was hardened to suffering and death. He had not realized that to the sickness and death of one's own, nothing can harden us. He stood breathing hard while his mother stooped over the bed.

"Ethan," she said softly, "our boy is here."

Brother Wilkins opened his eyes and smiled faintly. He tried to say something and Jason sprang to take his hand.

"Oh, he wants to speak to you and can't. O my poor dear! O Ethan, my dearest."

Jason's mother broke down. Jason put his finger on his father's wrist.

After a long moment, "Mother, he's gone," he whispered.

After the funeral, Jason wandered about the village for a day or so, trying to plan for his mother's future and his own. All the townspeople were kind to him.

"Haven't forgot how you loaned me those *Harper's Monthlies* before you read 'em yourself," said Mr. Inchpin. "Anything I can do for you or your mother, let me know."

The two had met in Hardwich's store, which was also the post office and the evening club for the males of High Hill. Jason had dropped in to post a letter.

A tall scraggly man joined in. "Your father was the best preacher in Ohio. We was all glad when he got back here."

"He had the gift of prayer," said an old man, in the back of the store.

There was a silence which Jason struggled in vain to break.

Then a young fellow who carried a buggy whip and smoked a cigar said, "How does the doctoring go, Jason?"

"Well, thanks," returned Jason, looking at the young fellow, intently. It was Billy Ames, he of the striped pants.

Back through Jason's heart, until now strangely softened by the happenings of the past few days, surged the accumulated bitterness of his poverty-stricken youth. He turned abruptly and left the store.

His mother was watching for him, anxiously. "Jason, Pilgrim had an accident. He's got a frightful cut on his right fore shoulder. He must have got caught on a nail somehow."

"Let's have a look at him," said Jason.

The big gray was standing stolidly in his stall. Mrs. Wilkins held the candle while

Jason examined him. On the right fore shoulder was a great three-cornered tear from which the skin hung in a bloody fold.

"I'll have to sew it up." Jason was all surgeon now. "Do you think he'll stand still for us?"

"Stand still," replied Jason's mother, indignantly. "Why, he'll know exactly what you are doing, and why."

"All right then. You get me some clean rags and a darning-needle and I'll get the rest of the things I'll need."

In a few moments the operation was well in hand.

Pilgrim kept his ears back and his eyes on his mistress. He breathed heavily, but otherwise he did not stir. He was a large horse, with a small, intelligent head and a mighty chest. Jason's mother held the candle with one hand while she stroked the big gray's nose with the other.

"Be careful, Jason, do!" she said softly.

Jason grunted. "You keep him from biting or kicking and I'll do my share," he said.

"Pilgrim bite!" cried Jason's mother indignantly.

Again Jason grunted, working swiftly, with the skill of trained and accustomed fingers. The candle flickered on his cool young face, on his black hair and on his long, strong, surgeon's fingers. It flickered too on his mother's sweet lips, on her tired brown eyes and iron-gray hair. It put high-lights on the cameo at her throat and made a grotesque shadow of her hoop-skirts on the stable wall.

Finally Jason straightened himself with a sigh and wiped his hands on a towel.

"That's a good job," he said. "Must be some bad spikes here or in the pasture fence to have given him that rip. I'll hunt them up tomorrow. — Get over there!"

This last to Pilgrim, who suddenly had put his head on Jason's shoulder with a soft nuzzling of his nose against the young doctor's

cheek and a little whinny that was almost human.

"Why, Jason, he's thanking you!" cried his mother. "He'll never forget what you've done for him tonight."

Jason gave the horse a careless slap and started out the stable door.

"You'll be having it that he speaks Greek next," he said.

"You don't know him," replied Jason's mother. "This is the first time you ever saw him, remember. These last three years of your father's life he's been like one of the family." She followed Jason into the cottage. "Often and often before your poor father died he said he'd never have been able to keep on with the circuit-riding and the preaching if he'd had to depend on any other horse than Pilgrim. That horse just knew father was forgetful. He wouldn't budge if father forgot the saddle-bags. When Pilgrim balked, father always knew he'd forgotten

something and he'd go back for it. I'll have supper on by the time you've washed up, Jason."

The little stove that was set in the fireplace roared lustily. The kettle was singing. The old yellow cat slept cozily in the wooden rocker on the patch-work cushion. All the furniture, so simple and worn, was as familiar to Jason as the back of his hand.

Jason washed at the bench in the corner, then sat down while his mother put the supper before him — fried mush, fried salt pork, tea and apple sauce.

"Well," said Jason soberly, "what are we going to do now, mother? Father's gone and—"

His mother's trembling lips warned him to stop.

"It doesn't seem possible," she said, "that it's only a week since we laid him away."

Jason interrupted gently. "I know, mother; but you and I have got to go on living!"

"It's you I'm worrying about," said his mother.

"I've been wondering if you hadn't better come back to Baltimore with me," mused Jason. "I can eke out a living somehow for the two of us."

"No," said Mrs. Wilkins decidedly. "You've got burden enough to take care of yourself. I can get along till you're doctoring for yourself. Mr. Inchpin will let me have the cottage near the wharf if I'll go up to his house and cook his dinner for him. Then with a little sewing and a little nursing here in the village, the cow, the chickens and Pilgrim, I can get along. But I don't see how I can send you anything, Jason."

Jason had brightened perceptibly. "If I can just get through this year, mother, I'll be on my feet. But I've got to pay Dr. Edwards back. He's a hard driver. If we can get together enough for that, I'll manage, somehow."

BENEFITS FORGOT

Jason's mother sighed. "It does seem as if, all through the years, I ought to have saved something, but I haven't, not a cent, except what I raked and scraped together for your doctoring. Two hundred and fifty dollars a year beside donation parties is quite a sum, Jason, and I feel guilty that I haven't saved anything for you. But it all went, especially after father got sickly. I've sold a lot of things, Jason, so as to send you the money. I'm most at my wit's end now. Grandma's silver teapot, that kept you three months, and your father's watch, nearly six. That's the way the things have gone. My, how thankful I was we had 'em."

Jason was still so very like his mother, so very unlike. Where her face was sweet and tremulous, his was cool and still. His brown eyes were careless and yet eager. Hers were not inscrutable now. The light had gone out of them from weeping. Jason's long, strong hands were smooth and quiet. Hers were

knotted and work calloused and a little uncertain.

As if something in her words irritated him, Jason said quickly, "Well, what did you and father start me on this doctor idea for, if you thought it was going to cost too much?"

"O, Jason, you know that thought never occurred to either of us! There are still some things to go that I've sort of hung on to. Take the St. Bartholomew candlestick to Mr. Inchpin. That will give you the money you need right now."

Jason looked up at the queerly wrought silver candlestick that was more like an old oil lamp than a candlestick. His mother's people had brought it from France with them. The family legend was that some Huguenot ancestor had come through the massacre of St. Bartholomew with this only relic of his home wrapped in his bosom.

"Good!" said Jason eagerly. "The old thing is neither fish nor flesh, anyhow. Too

big mouthed for a candle and folks are going to use coal oil more and more, anyhow. I can be off tomorrow."

"Tomorrow's Thanksgiving, Jason."

"I'll be glad to forget it," grumbled Jason. "What have we to be thankful for?"

His mother looked at him a little curiously, but she said nothing. Jason caught the expression in her eyes.

"Don't look at me that way, mother," he burst forth angrily, "I can't forgive father, with his big brain and body for doing so little for you and me. I can't forgive him for what he dragged us through — those donation parties! He had no right to put me through what he did that year at High Hill. And what did he get out of his life? They lay him away with the remark that he had a gift of prayer! And his widow may starve, for all of them."

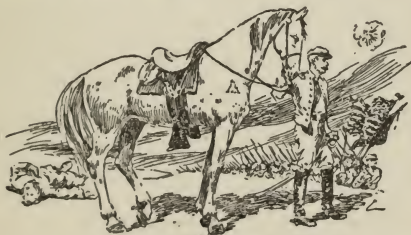
"Jason, be silent," cried his mother. She had risen and stood facing him, her face deathly white. "Not one word against your

father. Because you never could appreciate him, you needn't belittle him now. Not one word," as Jason would have spoken. "He was my husband and I loved him, God knows. O Ethan, Ethan, how shall I finish my span of years alone!" she broke down utterly.

Jason put his arms about her. "Mother, I didn't mean to hurt you. Truly I didn't. It's only that—" he stopped and set his lips tightly while he petted her in silence.

"I pray, Jason," said his mother, finally, "that you will never have a grief or a punishment great enough to soften your heart."

Jason did not answer. He went up to see Mr. Inchpin that night, and the following day started back East again.



IV
MR. LINCOLN



IV MR. LINCOLN

THREE times a week during the year that followed, Jason's mother saddled Pilgrim and rode him to the post office after the shrieks of the whistle had warned her that the tri-weekly packet had come and gone. Four times during the year she heard from Jason.

BENEFITS FORGOT

"April 3, 1862.

"DEAR MOTHER:

"I am very well indeed, and hope that you are not overworking. Things are not going very well here. Everybody is hard pressed because of the war and Dr. Edwards simply can't make any collections. We get a good many soldiers who are sent home half cured and, of course, we get nothing at all from them — don't want to, in fact. Is there any way we could raise just a little money? Not a cent that you've earned, understand, but perhaps you could sell your old mahogany hat-box. Mrs. Chadwick always wanted it. I never did care for those old things and I don't think you do. After I get started in practice, I'll buy you a dozen hat-boxes. Won't it be great when you can come down here and live with me?

"Your loving son,
"JASON."

"June 7, 1862.

"DEAR MOTHER:

"I have been quite sick with a sore hand — almost got gangrene from a soldier. That's why you haven't been hearing from me. I received the ten dollars. Thank you very much. I didn't think the old trap would bring that much. Dr. Edwards said yesterday that I had a genius for surgery. The ten dollars paid my board for six weeks, giving me a chance to take some extra cases for the doctor. The war looks bad, doesn't it? They need surgeons and though I'm doing

MR. LINCOLN

something in patching up these poor fellows and sending them back, I wonder often if I oughtn't to go into a war hospital. Do you remember the little cameo pin you used to wear till father thought it was too dressy for you? If you haven't lost it, I wish you'd send it down here for me to pawn. I can get it back after the war. I think of you often though I don't write. Don't work too hard.

"Your loving son,
"JASON."

"Sept. 24, 1862.

"DEAR MOTHER:

"Could you possibly sell something to get five dollars to me by return packet? Will write fully later.

"JASON."

But there was nothing more to sell.

"My dear boy," wrote Jason's mother, "I am heart-broken, for I know how hard you are working, but truly, I have nothing left of the least value. The cameo pin was the last. Am very much worried lest you are sick. Do let me know. I am very well and the neighbors are kind. Pilgrim is well, too, though the scar is there on his shoulder. I'm sure he will always remember what you did for him. He is all but human. *Please* write me.

"A hug and kiss, from Mother."

Jason's fourth letter was urgent and prompt in reply.

"DEAR MOTHER:

"I am going into the army, mother. The need for surgeons is urgent and I've got to help lick the South. I thought, barring the five from you, I could raise enough to buy into practice with Dr. Edwards before I leave, so that if I live, I will have that to return to. It will cost a hundred dollars. But I can't do it. So I guess you'll have to sell Pilgrim. I hate to ask it of you but after all he's only an expense to you and I'll buy you another, after the war. Sell him to the government for an army horse. Mr. Inchpin will attend to it for you.

"Lovingly,

"JASON."

Jason's mother read the letter with tears running down her cheeks. It was November. Drearily the Kentucky hills rolled back from the river and drearily the Ohio valleys stretched inland. Pilgrim plodded patiently toward the stable and his mistress, huddled in the saddle, gave him no heed until Pilgrim stamped impatiently at the stable door. Then

she dismounted and the great horse stamped into his stall.

“O Pilgrim,” she sobbed, “Jason is going to war. Jason is going to war. I can’t lose him too!”

The horse turned his fine head and nickered softly as he rubbed his soft nose on her shoulder.

“And I’ve got to let you go, old friend,” she added. “I know that I don’t need you, Pilgrim. It’s just that you are like a living bit of father — and if Jason would only seem to understand that, it wouldn’t be so hard to let you go. I wonder if all young folks are like Jason?”

Old Pilgrim leaned his head over his stall and in the November gloaming he looked long at his mistress with his wise and gentle eyes. It was as if he would tell her that he had learned that youth is always a little hard; that only long years in harness with always the back-breaking load to pull, not for one-

self, but for others, can make the really grateful heart. One of the sweet, deep compensations of the years, the gray horse seemed to say, is that gratitude grows in the soul.

So Jason and Old Pilgrim both went to war. They did not see each other, but each one, in his own way, made a brilliant record. Pilgrim learned the sights and sounds and smells of war. The fearful pools of blood ceased to send him plunging and rearing in harness. The screams of utter fear or of mortal agony no longer set him to neighing or sweating in sympathy. Pilgrim, superb in strength and superb in intelligence, plodded efficiently through a battle just as he had plodded efficiently over the circuit of Jason's Methodist father.

And Jason, cool and clear-headed, with his wonderful long strong hands, sawed and sewed and probed and purged his way through field hospital after field hospital, until the men began to hear of his skill and to ask for him

when the fear of death was on them. His work absorbed him more and more, until months went by, and he neglected to write to his mother! Just why, who can say? Each of us looking into his heart, perhaps can find some answer. But Jason was young, and work and world hungry. He did not ask himself embarrassing questions. The months slipped into a year, and the first year into a second year. Still Jason did not write to his mother, nor did he longer hear from her.

In November of the second year Jason was stationed in a hospital near Washington. One rainy morning as he made his way to the cot of a man who was dying of gangrene, an orderly stopped him.

"This is Dr. Jason Wilkins?"

"Yes."

"Sorry, Doctor, but I've got to arrest you and take you to Washington —"

Jason looked the orderly over incredulously. "You've got the wrong man, friend."

The soldier drew a heavy envelop carefully from his breast pocket, and handed it to Jason. Jason opened it uneasily, and gasped. This is what he read: "Show this to Surgeon Jason Wilkins, — Regiment. Arrest him. Bring him to me immediately.—A. LINCOLN."

Jason whitened. "What's up?" he asked the orderly.

"I didn't ask the President," replied the orderly dryly. "We'll start at once, if you please, Doctor."

In a daze, Jason left for Washington. He thought of all the minor offenses he had committed. But they were only such as any young fellow might have committed. He could not believe that any of them had reached Mr. Lincoln's ears, or that, if they had, the great man in the White House would have heeded them.

Jason was locked in a room in a Washington boarding-house for one night. The next

day at noon the orderly called for him. Weak-kneed, Jason followed him up the long drive to the door of the White House, and into a room where there were more orderlies and a man at a desk writing. An hour of dazed waiting, then a man came out of a door and spoke to the man at the desk.

“Surgeon Jason Wilkins,” said the sentry.

“Here!” answered Jason.

“This way,” jerked the orderly, and Jason found himself in the inner room, with the door closed behind him. The room was empty, yet filled. There was but one man in it besides Jason, but that man was Mr. Lincoln. He sat at a desk, with his somber eyes on Jason’s face — still a cool young face, despite trembling knees.

“You are Jason Wilkins?” said Mr. Lincoln.

“Yes, Mr. President,” replied the young surgeon.

“Where are you from?”

“High Hill, Ohio.”

“Have you any relatives?”

“Only my mother is living.”

“Yes, only a mother! Well, young man, how is your mother?”

Jason stammered. “Why, why — I don’t know.”

“You don’t know!” thundered Lincoln. “And why don’t you know? Is she living or dead?”

“I don’t know,” said Jason. “To tell the truth, I’ve neglected to write and I don’t suppose she knows where I am.”

There was a silence in the room. Mr. Lincoln clenched a great fist on his desk, and his eyes scorched Jason. “I had a letter from her. She supposes you dead and asked me to trace your grave. What was the matter with her? No good? Like most mothers, a poor sort? Eh? Answer me, sir?”

Jason bristled a little. “The best woman that ever lived, Mr. President.”

“Ah!” breathed Mr. Lincoln. “Still you

have no reason to be grateful to her! How'd you get your training as a surgeon? Who paid for it? Your father?"

Jason reddened. "Well, no; father was a poor Methodist preacher. Mother raised the money, though I worked for my board mostly."

"Yes, how'd she raise the money?"

Jason's lips were stiff. "Selling things, Mr. President."

"What did she sell?"

"Father's watch — the old silver teapot — the mahogany hat-box — the St. Bartholomew candlestick. Old things mostly; beyond use except in museums."

Again silence in the room, while a look of contempt gathered in Abraham Lincoln's eyes that seared Jason's cool young soul till it scorched him. "You poor fool!" said Lincoln. "You poor worm! Her household treasures — one by one — for you. 'Useless things — fit for museums!' Oh, you fool!"

Jason flushed angrily and bit his lips. Suddenly the President rose and pointed a long, bony finger at his desk. "Come here and sit down and write a letter to your mother!"

Jason stalked obediently over and sat down in the President's seat. Anger and mortification were ill inspirations for letter-writing, but under Lincoln's burning eyes Jason seized a pen and wrote his mother a stilted note. Lincoln paced the floor, pausing now and again to look over Jason's shoulder.

"Address it and give it to me," said the President. "I'll see that it gets to her." Then, his stern voice rising a little: "And now, Jason Wilkins, as long as you are in the army, you write to your mother once a week. If I have reason to correct you on the matter again, I'll have you court-martialed."

Jason rose and handed the letter to the President, then stood, angry and silent, awaiting further orders. Abraham Lincoln took another turn or two up and down the room.

Then he paused before the window and looked from it a long, long time. Finally he turned to Jason.

“My boy,” he said gently, “there’s no finer quality in the world than gratitude. There is nothing a man can have in his heart so mean, so low as ingratitude. Even a dog appreciates a kindness, never forgets a soft word, or a bone. To my mind, the noblest holiday in the world is Thanksgiving. And, next the Creator, there is no one the holiday should be dedicated to as much as to mothers.”

Again Lincoln paused, and looked from the boyish face of the young surgeon out of the window at the bleak November skies, and Lincoln said to Jason, with God knows what tragedy of memory in his lonely heart:

“Freeze, freeze, thou bitter sky,
Thou dost not bite so nigh
As benefits forgot.”

Another pause. “You may go, my boy.”

And Lincoln shook hands with Jason, who stumbled from the room, his mind a chaos of resentment and anger. He made his way down Pennsylvania Avenue, pausing as two army officers rode up to a hotel and dismounted, leaving their horses. Something about the big gray that one of the officers rode seemed vaguely familiar to the young doctor. The gray turned his small, intelligent head toward Jason, then with a sudden soft whinny, laid his head on Jason's shoulder and nuzzled his cheek gently. Jason looked at the right fore shoulder. A three-cornered scar was there. Jason and Old Pilgrim never had met but once, and yet — Jason was little more than a boy. Suddenly he threw his arms around Old Pilgrim's neck, and sobbed into the silky mane. Passers-by glanced curiously and then went on. Washington was full of tears those days.

Pilgrim whinnied and waited patiently. Finally Jason dried his eyes, then stood in

thought. The officer who had ridden Pilgrim came out at last. Jason saluted.



“Captain, I’d like to buy that horse from you.”

The captain laughed. "There are a number of others like you."

"No, but let me tell you about him, Captain. Give me ten minutes. I'm Dr. Wilkins of —— Hospital."

"O yes, I know of your work. What's the story, Doctor?"

Jason told Pilgrim's history. "She gave him up for me and now I've found him," he finished. "I want to buy him back, get a furlough and take him home to her, myself. I've been saving my money."

"You may have him for just what I paid for him, Doctor," said the captain, who was considerably Jason's senior. "Tell your mother I wish my own mother were living and that I do this in her memory."

"Thank you, sir," said Jason.

A week later Jason led Pilgrim out of the freight car in which he had traveled from Washington to a railway station twenty-five miles from home. The river packets were

not running and this was the nearest station to High Hill. It was noon and cold. Jason mounted and started south briskly and once more the Ohio valley opened up before him.

It seemed to Jason that he was seeing the hills for absolutely the first time. And yet that could not be, for back with the first sight of the distant river came all his old boyish reverence for the headlands. The last time he had ridden horseback in the hills had been in the West Virginia circuit, with his father.

For the first time since his interview with the President, Jason began to think of his father. All his newly awakened sense of gratitude had been centered on his mother. Did he then owe his father nothing?

It took courage, it took nerve, it took stomach to patch together the bloody wrecks on the field of battle. It had taken tenacity to an ideal to starve and toil for his profession as he had done in Baltimore. Whence had come these qualities to Jason? He

thought once more of his father on that trip on the West Virginian circuit, of the boys expelled from the church, of Sister Clark, of his own sense of mortification and his own contempt. And he dropped his head on his breast with a groan.

And so as the sun set, Pilgrim with the scar on his right fore shoulder and Jason with the scar on his soul that only remorse implants there, stopped before the cottage in High Hill. And through the window, Jason's mother saw them. She rushed to the door and Jason, dismounting, ran up to her, and dropping on his knees, threw his arms about her waist and sobbed against her bosom;

“O mother! O mother! Forgive me! I didn't realize. I didn't know!” Just as many, many sons have done before, and just as many more will do, please God, as long as love and gratitude endure.

DEARER THAN ALL

DEARER THAN ALL

EARLY in the morning about two weeks after little Willie Lincoln's death, Lizzie Keckley rapped at the President's bedroom door and came in with a steaming cup of coffee. Mr. Lincoln was shaving; his suspenders were hanging, his cheeks covered with lather.

He looked at the colored woman anxiously. "How is Mrs. Lincoln this morning?" he asked.

"I don't like her looks, sir!" replied Lizzie. "She won't speak a word."

"I'll go right in to see her!" exclaimed Lincoln, starting for the door which led to his wife's room.

"Wait a minute, Mr. President, do!" urged Lizzie, putting the tray on the bedside table, close to the open Bible. "She's just getting quiet and you can have your coffee and get yourself dressed before she sees you."

Lincoln paused, caught a glimpse of his

ghastly face in the mirror above his mantel and grinned sardonically.

"My poor wife has seen me in this shape something over a million times, I reckon," he said, "but you're right! It won't help her any if I rush in half-cocked." He strode over to the table and began to sip the coffee avidly. The March morning was bitter cold and he had had a horrible night.

Lizzie stood watching him. She was a comely woman of middle age, a dressmaker who, while plying her trade for Mrs. Lincoln, had become her friend and attendant. She had been up all night with his wife, Lincoln knew, but this morning she was neat as a pin. The full white apron over her modest crinoline was crisp and fresh. She was gentle yet keen, and Lincoln felt more comfort in her presence than he had in anyone's since his son had died. There is something about a faithful colored servant which invites one's confidence and the President was moved to ease his over-charged heart a little.

"My wife," he said, "stood up like an In-

dian chief when our little Eddie died twelve years ago. But she was younger then and hadn't ever had such a strain as she's gone through here in Washington. Lizzie, deep down in my old soul, I wish we'd never come here. If we'd never left Springfield, Willie would still be with us! And it looks like anyone could run this war better than A. Lincoln's doing it!"

Lizzie's big, intelligent eyes deepened till they were like pools of still, black water. "There don't live a negro in the United States, to-day, that don't know that the day you came to Washington they were as good as free, Mr. Lincoln. God is in all this! Although it does look like the war had killed Master Willie and was bearing down heavy on Mrs. Lincoln. Still, He *is* guiding you."

Lincoln gulped the rest of his coffee. "Then I wish He'd tell me just what He expects me to do," he muttered. He went on after a moment. "Sometimes I'm so homesick for Springfield and our own little home that I could sit down and cry like a lovesick girl!

We had a mighty nice place there, Lizzie, and Mrs. Lincoln had furnished it as pretty as any house in Springfield. She was proud of it and so was I, by Jings!" He looked down at his long, nervous hands. "Used to milk our old cow with these! I like fresh milk. And I used to work in the garden and just before breakfast go to market for my wife and meet all my neighbors there. Lizzie, that kind of a life is best; not so simple that you have to sacrifice your mind to your hands but simple enough so you don't get away from the smell of plowed fields or from that 'one touch of nature,' " grinning, "like milking my old cow!" He crossed to the wash-stand and went on with his shaving.

"Mrs. Lincoln's been awfully homesick, too," nodded the colored woman. "Even before Master Willie came down with typhoid I found her crying many a time for her old friends. When the ladies here in Washington turned the cold shoulder on her and made such scandalous lies about her, it hurt her ambitions and it hurt her pride like you don't

understand, Mr. Lincoln. Then when Master Willie died—no wonder she went hysterical. But the hysterics was natural to her nature. And now she don't shed a tear nor speak a word. And I don't like the look in her eyes."

Lincoln had finished scraping his face and at Lizzie's last words refused to be detained another instant. He hurriedly opened the door into Mary's room.

She was sitting by the fire in a black dressing-gown. Her long, chestnut braids hung nearly to the floor. Her blue eyes were enormous in her little round face. She gave her husband a vacant glance and returned to her contemplation—if it was contemplation—of the fire.

Lincoln's heart sank. He pulled up a rocking chair and sitting close beside Mary took her cold little hand in his.

"Well, my darling wife," he said, "I hope you slept a little last night."

Mary did not glance at him or reply.

"Lizzie is bringing you a cup of coffee," he

went on, chafing her fingers. "I've had one and it will put new life into you as it has into me. Won't it, my dear?" He bent forward and with his free hand turned her face gently toward his. "Answer me, Mary!" he pleaded.

The blank look did not leave her face.

Mary silent! Mary refusing to answer a question! Mary! Tempestuous, gallant, loquacious Mary! Where was she? To what far realm had Mary's soul retreated? Something very like panic seized Lincoln by the throat.

"Wife!" he whispered. "Mary! Speak to me! It's Abraham. It's your husband! God, Mary, speak to me!"

She moved her head indifferently from his hand and gazed at the fire. He threw himself down beside her and drew her against his breast. He kissed her cold cheeks, her cold lips.

"Darling Mary!" he gasped. "Come back! Don't go away from me! Where are you, Mary?"

Someone rapped at the door. Lincoln laid

his wife back in her chair but continued on his knees beside her. "Come in!" he called hoarsely.

Lizzie entered with the cup of coffee.

"How long has she been like this?" he demanded. "She seemed to be sleeping naturally when I looked in at midnight."

"I thought she was, too," agreed the colored woman. "But she got out of bed about four this morning and has been sitting like this ever since."

"Send for Dr. Stone right away," ordered the President. "Give me that coffee. She'll take it from me if she will from anybody on earth!"

"I've already sent for the doctor, sir," replied Lizzie, handing him the cup.

But Mary refused to take the beverage from either of them and Dr. Stone arrived to put an end to their pleadings. He examined her carefully, then shook his head.

"Shock! The big shock coming on top of her year of mental distress. Don't bother her. Let Tad come in and play quietly around the

room several times during the morning—*quietly*, mind you. Mr. President, you look in on her occasionally. Lizzie, you remain with her constantly. Keep everyone else out. And if she does come out of this coma be very sure you act as if nothing had happened. Try to keep her from knowing she's been—er—ill. I'll be back at noon."

Lincoln shuddered. "You think she's—"

Dr. Stone interrupted. "I don't know what to think, Mr. Lincoln. We'll hope for the best." He patted the President's arm. Lincoln was still in undress, his suspenders dangling. "Go put your warm clothes on, sir, and get a hot meal. We'll take care of Mrs. Lincoln. She has a peculiarly high strung, sensitive nature, not fit to cope with the treatment she's receiving in Washington."

"She shall go right back to Springfield if you think it's best!" ejaculated Lincoln.

"She'd never consent, Mr. Lincoln!" cried Lizzie Keckley. "It would really kill her to be separated from you. She thinks she's your mainstay and support."

"And that's really what she is," Lincoln replied grimly.

He walked bleakly back to his own room and finished dressing.

Nobody knew what Mary meant to him, he thought. He scarcely knew himself. It was like asking what one's own soul meant to one. What Mary was to him had nothing whatever to do with an estimate of her character or of his. She was quite literally his mainstay. It was her faith in his powers, her ambition for his career which had put his tremendous faculties to work, which had made a President of him. But motive force was not what Mary meant to him.

She had a cultivated mind, packed with beauty. She had a gracious heart. She had a dainty body and she was associated always in his mind with pretty, sweet-smelling clothing and with nice backgrounds, old mahogany, bright flowers (for she loved flowers), a well kept, orderly household. All the graces for which he had yearned and which he never had found as a boy, Mary had given

him. But the gracious life was not what she meant to Lincoln.

His slow, cool mind warmed itself before the flame of her passionate tempers. His uncouth ways revealed themselves to him in the light of her suavities. . . . Yet, as he enumerated all these qualities, while he slowly finished his toilet, Lincoln knew that these were not Mary.

She was himself—his wife—his love—the friend and deep comrade of his inner being. This was Mary.

“And by the Eternals,” he said aloud, “she shan’t go away without me!”

It was, after all, only eight o’clock when he reached the breakfast table. Nine-year-old Taddie was there with the two hounds, his and Willie’s. There was a wild rainstorm in progress outside but the dining-room was full of Mary’s flowers, daffodils and hyacinths and a great bunch of forced lilacs. A fire of hickory logs blazed gayly on the hearth.

Business began almost at once. With the second batch of griddle-cakes, John Hay, one

of the secretaries, appeared. He was a slender youth of twenty-four, with jet-black hair and eyes and a round face with ruddy cheeks. He wore a gray suit and a remarkable purple silk waistcoat.

"The Army of the Potomac is on the move, sir!" he announced, eyes twinkling. "Pretty good for Little Napoleon! He's only a month behind your order! Not bad for our McClellan!"

"Are you only making a poor joke, John?" asked the President. Next to Mary, General McClellan was his most immediate and painful problem and for once his sense of humor wasn't working.

John was quick to sense the older man's mood. "It's a fact, Mr. Lincoln!" he insisted. "McClellan's managed to tear himself away from the Potomac long enough to march down to Manassas. But he got there to find the Confederates had made a monkey of him again! Johnston has retreated and is a safe thirty miles south of Manassas. By Jove, even the guns the Rebels left behind were bogus;

logs painted up as cannon! It's humiliating! Just think of Mac's keeping 150,000 men in this neighborhood to protect us from that!"

"And McClellan's in pursuit?" Lincoln tried to speak hopefully.

"Not yet, they told me at the War Office. That's last night's news, of course! He may be moving now. Let's hope it's in the right direction!"

Lincoln did not wait to finish his breakfast.

"Tad," he said, "you go up very softly and kiss your mother good-morning." Then he started for his office where the latest telegrams would be awaiting him.

The office was a large room full of ugly furniture. The huge oak cabinet table occupied the center and a sofa stood on either side of the door into the secretary's room. The President's desk was placed near the south window from which he could look out on the unfinished Washington monument, the winding Potomac and the red hills of Virginia—hills which now were enemy territory!

Edwin Stanton, the Secretary of War, stood

in the window, waiting for Lincoln. Tugging at his long, dark beard, he rushed across to the fireplace where the President came to pause and without a greeting or preamble shouted:

"You've got to put the spurs on McClellan now and ride him. He's got to rush Johnston off his legs, now he's finally found his own!"

The President dropped into a chair and stretched out his long shanks, showing a generous length of gray woolen sock. "Mr. Stanton," he said, "you're McClellan's friend and admirer so maybe you'll tell me what kind of a spur will reach a sensitive spot in his hide. He treats all my orders with contempt."

"If a man will accept contempt, he'll generally get it," sneered Stanton.

Lincoln nodded. He knew that Stanton despised him but he also believed Stanton, once he had been licked into shape, would make a magnificent Secretary of War.

"I can stand any amount of disloyalty to me, personally, from any of you," he said, "just as long as you're loyal to your jobs. McClellan's

dreamed of being Dictator or President ever since he got his present position of Commander-in-Chief."

"Why did you appoint him, if that's true?" demanded Stanton.

Lincoln grinned. "He's a great organizer, the greatest I know. We lost the battle of Bull Run because our army wasn't organized. McClellan's done a splendid job in creating the Army of the Potomac. That he's behaved pretty ugly to me doesn't make him less fit for his place. You remember that when the Lord was on Mount Sinai getting out a commission for Aaron, that same Aaron was at the foot of the mountain making a false god for the people to worship. Yet Aaron got his commission, you know."

"Is this personal, Mr. Lincoln?" Stanton's face above his beard was purple. He had been notoriously disloyal to the President.

"Well, you, too, have said some ugly things about me but those things don't hurt like they used to." Lincoln stared at Stanton. Mary liked him, and Mary was a good judge of

men. When he listened to her advice it was always sound. Mary! What if never again that sound judgment—! “If you’ll excuse me, Mr. Stanton,” he said suddenly, “I’ll go see how my wife is. She isn’t well.”

He hurried out of the office to Mary’s room.

She still sat before the fire, Lizzie at hand with a bit of sewing. The woman shook her head as the President lifted questioning brows.

“Perhaps she’s just resting her poor tired mind,” he whispered, hoping against hope. He stooped and kissed Mary’s cold lips then went slowly back to Stanton.

“I hope dear Mrs. Lincoln isn’t seriously ill?” queried the Secretary of War, gently.

“My wife’s feeling Willie’s death. She’s—she’s—well, thank you for enquiring, Mr. Secretary.” He walked over to the war map which hung on the wall. “As for McClellan, I’m as eaten up with anxiety over his *slows* as anyone.”

“What I fear is,” half whispered Stanton as if ashamed of a disloyalty, “that he’s *afraid*.”

The nasty fact is that he didn't start for Manassas till he knew the place had been evacuated!"

"Jings!" muttered Lincoln. Then he added, cheerfully, "Granting even that, at least now he's doing what we ordered him to do a month ago. He is heading for Richmond by land rather than *boating* his army down the Chesapeake. I shudder when I think what the Rebels could do if that iron-covered ship they're said to be making at Norfolk should get out in time to meet McClellan's transports. They say no wooden ship will be able to stand up against her. It's the old *Merrimac*, you know. They're sheathing her with iron bars."

"Fool notion! Of course she'll sink," grunted Stanton. "But if, as you say, McClellan'll only go along on his legs, nothing else matters. Spur him, sir."

"I have a spur, all right, Mr. Stanton," replied Lincoln, grimly. "If McClellan fails to follow up this advantage at Manassas, I'll remove him as Commander-in-Chief."

Stanton roared, "Never! Nothing so drastic! He's invaluable!"

"Nobody's invaluable, not even you or I," grinned Lincoln.

Stanton went out, slamming the door.

Lincoln turned to his mail and after attending to that attempted to concentrate his mind on his scheme for helping the Rebel State governments to buy out the slave interests of their citizens. He called it Compensated Emancipation. But he was constantly interrupted, for he still refused to let his secretaries protect him from the public, and there was a continued parade of voters through his office. They were there, not to lay frankincense and myrrh on the altar of freedom but to abuse, threaten, adjure and beg with a violence that after a few hours left Lincoln wondering if his very flesh were not bruised and inflamed.

He took his lunch from a tray on his desk, eating with one hand and writing his message to Congress with the other.

But Mary's face kept coming between him and the manuscript, her pretty face with its

strange vacant stare. It came for a moment between him and the figure of John Hay who entered, softly. Lincoln brushed the vision away with a gesture of his arm and looked at John with tormented eyes.

The young man drew a quick breath. The doctor had told him about Mrs. Lincoln. He had come in to help if he could.

"Mr. President," he began, "there actually is some pleasant news to report! Adelina Patti is in Washington!"

Lincoln laid down his pen. "Is she, by Jings! I saw her in 1853 when she was on a concert tour with Ole Bull. She was only ten and as pretty a little girl as you'd find anywhere, though I remember she had sort of a Roman nose. But a woman or a horse with a Roman nose is always kind! Have you seen or heard her, John?"

"Both!" with a gusty sigh. He leaned on the Cabinet table as if his emotions exhausted him. "Both! And I can only wish I were a younger man!"

"Why? Do you want Patti to *adopt* you?" grinned Lincoln. "She's only 19, you know."

"Ah, but this war has aged me, sir! I'm little better than a lean and slippered pantaloons, now; no fit meat for her young talents."

"Somewhat mixed but I reckon I understand and sympathize!" smiled Lincoln. He loved John Hay. "I wish I could hear her again. Mrs. Lincoln has said a dozen times since the world began to go crazy over Patti that she wished *she* could hear her. But now my poor wife is in bad shape and anyhow, so soon after Willie's death, we couldn't go to a concert."

"But look here, sir," John stood up eagerly, "you must make use of your prerogatives! *Command* Patti to appear at the White House to sing for you."

"Oh, come!" grinned Mr. Lincoln. "That would be about like an old mule ordering a nightingale to amuse him!"

"You just give me the word," urged the young man, "and I'll trot the divine Patti up here to this very room and guarantee she'll

be flattered to come! Jove! Wouldn't I like the job!"

"I don't doubt it!" exclaimed the President. "Well, if she's still in the city when my wife is better—" He turned back to his message and John returned to his work.

Lincoln wrote a few words. "In full view of my responsibilities to my God and to my country—" Again he threw down his pen and went into his wife's bedroom.

There was no change.

The afternoon dragged on. The whole country was consumed with anxiety and Lincoln was the focus of everyone's fears and doubts. Callers passed through his office in an endless stream. He spent the evening in a long conference with the Congressional Committee on the Conduct of the War. Its members were in an ugly mood. They left at midnight and, after he had signed his message to Congress, he went to his room. There he got into dressing-gown and slippers and hurried in to see his wife.

Lizzie had got her into bed. Lincoln sent

the tired servant off for a few hours' rest and, pulling a chair up to Mary's bedside, he took her hand and began to talk to her quietly. He told her about Manassas and about Tad's endeavor to stable his goats in the State Bedroom. He told her about Stanton's call and about Adelina Patti.

Not a flicker of intelligence showed in the wide eyes.

He leaned toward her. "Wouldn't you like to hear Patti sing 'Home, Sweet Home,' Mary? Remember how Queen Victoria cried when Patti sang it for her? I suppose because the Queen, poor thing, never had a *home*—just palaces!—Mary, I'm going to buy back our house in Springfield to have when we go home from here. I'm mighty sick of living 'mid pleasures and palaces,' I can tell you!—Mary! I'm homesick for everything that used to be—but most of all for you!" He gazed on her in agonized concentration. "My dearest wife, come back! Come back to me!" He laid his cheek on her hand. She did not stir but somehow the touch of her palm com-

forted him and, in this posture, after a time, he fell asleep.

Lizzie roused him two hours later and sent him to his room. He did not go to bed at once, but read his Bible. Then as the storm had cleared, he stood for a long time at the window gazing down the shining Potomac toward Alexandria.

The next morning there still was no change in Mary and he did not go to church but after breakfast dejectedly visited his office. There an excited messenger from the Navy Department was awaiting him with news.

The *Merrimac* had come out from Norfolk, the day before, and attacked the Federal Navy in Hampton Roads. In an hour, she had sunk the *Cumberland*. She had run the *Roanoke*, the *St. Lawrence* and the *Congress* aground and, assisted by three other Rebel boats, had raked the *Congress* until, after fearful losses, she, too, had surrendered. The *Merrimac* then had been obliged to move off because of low tide but she undoubtedly, with high tide, could renew the attack.

"You go tell Mr. Welles to come over here," ordered Lincoln, "and Mr. Stanton, too."

The man rushed out and Lincoln began to study the war map.

Gideon Welles, the Secretary of the Navy, was about sixty, a handsome man with smooth, white beard and hair. He came into the office sedately.

"I hope Mrs. Lincoln is better, Mr. President," he said as he shook hands.

"Not much, I'm afraid," replied Lincoln. "What about the *Merrimac*, Mr. Welles?"

Before the Secretary could answer Stanton burst into the room. "For God's sake!" he shouted. "Can you sit idle here while that damned iron demon destroys every vessel in the service, lays every city on the coast under tribute and sinks McClellan's transports? She can attack New York or Boston and levy enough from them to pay for the war. She can come up to Washington, destroy the capital and disperse Congress."

"I think that last would distinctly be giving

us aid and comfort!" remarked Lincoln. "If I could only be sure she *would* disperse Congress—"

Stanton interrupted. "You dare to make your imbecile jokes while the country falls?" he roared. He was beside himself with fear. "Welles!" shaking his fist in the sardonic face of the Navy Chief, "Welles, what have you done to try to prevent the *Merrimac* from coming up the Potomac?"

"I think, I hope, the *Monitor* has reached Hampton Roads," he replied, calmly and cautiously.

"And what is the *Monitor*?" cried a new voice. William Seward, the Secretary of State, had come in; a small, carelessly-dressed man, with smooth, hawklike face and tumbled gray hair. He was deathly white and his voice quivered as he added, "I suppose it's all up with Washington!"

Lincoln looked from one man to the other in astonishment not unmixed with cynical amusement. So this was the way the chief members of his Cabinet would behave under

fire! "Though," he added to himself, "I might be just as panicky if it wasn't that all the fears I possess are in use for Mary!" Aloud he remarked, "Mr. Welles, is your calm really well-founded?"

"It's certain the *Merrimac* can't visit New York and Washington at the same time," replied Welles, in his dry manner, "and the *Monitor* has been on its way down from Long Island for two days. The storm yesterday must have delayed her."

"What's the *Monitor*?" demanded Stanton. "By God, I've ordered canal boats loaded with stone sunk across the Potomac. That'll be worth all your naval service!"

"Stanton's Navy!" chuckled Lincoln. "Describe yours, Mr. Welles! Seems like it's comprised in the *Monitor*."

"The *Monitor*," began Welles, quietly, "is an iron raft, to all appearances, with an iron cheese box on top. Really it's a ship, sheathed in iron plates, her top deck flush with the water, and two guns mounted in a revolving turret on that deck. She draws only half as

much water as the *Merrimac* and is ten times as seaworthy. And"—his voice rising for the first time—"she'll lick molasses out of the *Merrimac*, if only she gets there in time."

"And a year ago Welles didn't know the front end of a boat from the hind end!" said Lincoln, admiringly.

"Mr. Lincoln, your ribaldry infuriates me!" cried Stanton. "Can't you see the futility, the childish futility of Welles's ideas?"

"Sir," said Mr. Welles, flushing a little, "I assure you for your comfort that this is the most painful hour in my life! The moment is portentous to the nation and the consequences of disaster lie heavier on me than on any other individual. You do nothing to sustain or encourage me or others by your display of malice and fear!"

Lincoln, who had been standing in the window looking down the Potomac, where he supposed the *Merrimac* might at any moment appear, now took a hand. He walked over to Welles who was standing beside the hearth

and put his arm on the Secretary's lean shoulders.

"I can't help wondering with a little malice of my own," he said, "if this news won't make McClellan step a little faster! The question is, in which direction! What is the latest news of your Little Napoleon, Mr. Stanton?"

Stanton who was pacing the floor flung the answer over his shoulder. "He's on his way back to Alexandria."

"In time to be shelled by the *Merrimac*!" exclaimed Seward.

Lincoln drew a deep breath and summoned all the courage and resolution he possessed. "I must find a new Commander-in-Chief," he said quietly.

Ordinarily, Stanton would have met this with most violent opposition. But now he only grunted and continued to pace the floor. Seward and Welles discussed McClellan for a moment but returned almost at once to conversation, very urgent and nervous on Seward's part, about the *Monitor*.

"Well," thought Lincoln, "the *Merrimac*

may not disperse Congress for me but she certainly has drawn off the fire of the opposition to McClellan's demotion! I expected to have a first class row with Stanton."

The hours dragged on. Telegraph messengers came and went. Orderlies and underlings dashed in and out. But no word came from Hampton Roads. By noon, news of yesterday's calamity had become general in the city and excited crowds streamed to the White House. Their importunities added the final peak of worry and unpleasantness to the day. Other members of the Cabinet joined the group in the President's office. The sense of suspense and of confusion was very oppressive. Lincoln, escaping frequently to Mary's room, found its quiet soothing in spite of his consuming anxiety over her.

About four o'clock, as Lincoln was leaving his wife's room, John Hay accosted him excitedly. "Look at that mob, sir! And I've invited Patti here! We've got to do something to get rid of them!" He waved his arm toward the main staircase up which a stream

of people was moving and toward the hall below, which was packed. "The Blue Room, the East Room, the Red Room are full of milling fools!" he groaned. "Won't you go make 'em a speech, sir, to clear 'em out?"

"Patti?" asked Lincoln, blinking.

John nodded, "I asked her to come as a surprise for you at four o'clock to-day. And in the excitement I forgot to call her off."

"Well, go down in the front yard and *head* her off now," said the President, "when she drives up."

"Couldn't I bring her up to the library and let her sing there?" urged John. "I—er—was very exigent about your desire to see her and—"

"But how can she sing with this mob in the house and my wife ill?" asked Lincoln, impatiently. "And how can we get rid of them unless we satisfy them with news? And there is no news! If they'd only go! I feel as if they suffocated me!"

"There's Mr. Welles half way down the

stairs speaking to them!" said John. "He'll send 'em packing!"

But it was not Welles's voice which suddenly stilled the clatter of the crowd. In tones of indescribable sweetness someone was singing a familiar song.

" 'Mid pleasures and palaces, though we may
 roam,
Be it ever so humble, there's no place like
 home."

Matchless purity of tone, matchless ecstasy of expression! It was Patti!

"An exile from home, splendor dazzles in vain.
Oh, give me my lowly thatched cottage again!
The birds singing gayly that come at my call,
Give me them, with the peace of mind dearer
 than all."

Complete silence followed the cessation of the lovely melody. Then Secretary Welles said firmly, "Won't you all please disperse! Mrs. Lincoln is ill. The moment we have news we will announce it from the steps of the Navy Offices."

As if Patti's voice had reduced them to automatons, the crowd after applauding moved quietly into the portico.

"I must thank her," said Lincoln. "Go down and keep her, John, until I can get there."

With a delighted grin, young Hay obeyed. Lincoln hurried back to his office to excuse himself and, as he and Mr. Welles entered at opposite doors, a telegram was handed to the Secretary of the Navy. He read it and then, deadly white, looked at his anxious colleagues.

"The *Monitor*," he said quietly, "met the *Merrimac* this morning and has driven her back, badly crippled, into Norfolk. All danger from that source is ended."

Lincoln had a vague notion that Stanton kissed him. He was certain that he, himself, kissed Welles. And he actually saw Seward dance the Highland Fling! And observing that his companions were thus well occupied, he decided to take this moment to slip down to greet Patti. But as he went out into the hall, he met Lizzie Keckley.

"Come quick!" she whispered. "That singing roused her!"

He darted into Mary's room. She was standing before her mirror, fully dressed.

"Hurry up, Abraham," she said in a casual voice. "Patti is downstairs. John Hay told Lizzie. They're waiting for us."

"Mary!" gulped Lincoln.

"Be careful, sir," pleaded Lizzie.

Mary looked from one to the other questioningly.

"The *Monitor* has licked whey out of the *Merrimac*!" cried the President, getting his wits together.

She smiled, "Mr. Welles was sure it would, his wife told me the other day. Do brush your hair and put on a clean collar, Abraham!"

"You bet I will!" His voice broke a little in spite of himself. In his room, his trembling fingers refused to button the collar. Mary, following, said, "Sit down and I'll do it for you. You and Tad ought to learn to dress yourselves!" She patted his arm and kissed him.

A moment later, they were moving down the stair-case. Only a few members of the household were in the Blue Room with Patti. The young girl was standing by the piano with John Hay. She wore white and was very handsome. She showed her Italian blood with splendid eyes under heavy dark brows, an aquiline nose and a mouth that was sensitive yet resolute.

Mary took both of Patti's hands as she exclaimed, "It was good of you to sing to us!"

Lincoln tried to thank her for soothing the savage breasts of the mob.

"I didn't know I was being clever, Mr. President," explained Patti. "The people recognized me and made such a riot with their demands for a song that I only responded to quiet them. It was Mr. Welles who was the clever one in seizing just the right moment to get rid of them." Then she added a little shyly, "I will sing to you now if you want me to." She turned at once to the piano.

Lincoln and Mary seated themselves on a sofa near a window. If there were others in

the room, Lincoln made no note of them. After the fever of the past forty-eight hours, he was finding it difficult to orient himself. And, lovely as her voice was, Patti's selection from "*La Sonnambula*" added, a little, to his confusion of thought. He understood only simple music. This song lacked tune to his ears. Perhaps Patti, singing with her eyes on his, understood this, for having finished the brilliant piece she thrust her accompanist aside and played for herself the opening bars to "The Last Rose of Summer."

Lincoln closed his eyes and lost himself in a dream of beauty and of melancholy. Mary left her seat and stood with her back to the room, gazing out of the window. When Patti brought the song softly to an end, Lincoln cleared his throat and asked a little diffidently for "Home, Sweet Home" again. Patti returned obediently to the piano.

He had been hearing the song for forty years and always it had moved him with a pleasurable sort of pain. But to hear Patti sing it! Where did this young girl get the

power to impart such anguished loveliness to the simple words?

Lincoln bowed his face in his hands and floated away on a sea of passionate longing for that which never more could be.

He was roused by Mary's hand on his hair. He looked up. They were alone in the dusk.

"Where is Patti?" he asked.

"She and the others," Mary replied, "stole away, overcome with embarrassment, I'm afraid, by our display of emotion. We must get a grip on ourselves, my dear."

He took her suddenly and fiercely into his arms and kissed her hungrily. "At least, I have *you* back again!" he said huskily. "Never leave me again, Mary! Never! At least, not unless I can go with you."

"I wasn't far away," she returned, wonderingly. "Only standing in the window to hide my tears, my darling husband." Then she added with a tender smile, "I never go so far but that a stride or two will bring you to me, now, do I?"

He kissed her again and again in silence and in thankfulness. For one more of the painful, the terrible, hazards with which his life was now beset had been passed in safety!

THE LOST SPEECH
OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN

PREFACE

Years ago, I read Miss Ida Tarbell's beautiful account of Lincoln's "Lost Speech" in her life of the Great Emancipator. The thought of that immense effort, with its still more immense results, haunted me. And I made up my mind that a very appealing piece of fiction could be based upon that episode in history. So, forthwith, I began to collect data in reference to the occasion which had brought forth that immortal and forgotten burst of oratory.

I did not limit my inquiries to books and reports. I found some of my most touching information in conversations with old people. My uncle, as an adolescent boy, heard that speech. He knew the girl, whom I call Rose Franklin, and whom I, later, knew as a handsome old lady. He knew

Lincoln, too. Another dear old friend knew the newspaper men I have mentioned in the story. And there are many other persons too numerous to mention here, who helped me find detail for the narrative. Little Bodie I knew for many years, until he died, at the age of seventy-four.

So, of those passionate human beings, already beginning to be obscured by the mists of time, I have set down the story, as simply and as sincerely as I might.

THE LOST SPEECH

VERY early on the morning of May 29, 1856, Rose Franklin walked up the chief thoroughfare of Bloomington, Illinois, with her small brother dragging on her hand. In her gray silk frock with its crinoline distended skirt, Rose was an imposing figure. She was so imposing, in fact, that even when the fragrant May wind had not wrapped him in the folds of his sister's billowing skirt, young Bodie was almost imperceptible to the naked eye. And young Bodie, at that, was not without his own splendors, for he wore a velvet suit and a stiff hat with long streamers and was eight years old and had a classic perfection of feature. He looked like his fair-haired mother, who had died at his birth.

Rose, however, looked like Ichabod Frank-

lin, the father of the two. And Ichabod had a dwarfing effect on nearly everyone but his daughter. She was twenty-eight, with her father's intelligent brown eyes and her father's intelligent forehead only partially concealed by the parted hair, waving on either side of it. She had, in lesser degree, her father's massive neck. The black curls, caught back loosely in a net, only served to accentuate its ivory strength. She carried her head a little forward, like Ichabod, and only recurrent dimples at the corners of her lips prevented her slender mouth from being too firm, like Ichabod's. Her shoulders were broad and straight, so broad that, contrasted with them and with the undulating crinoline, her waist was of astounding slimness.

She was, to quote her father, who was noted for a curious jealous devotion to her, "a splendid looking woman, though too large for most men's taste, thank heaven!" Not every man's taste, however. Among her

father's political friends and enemies there were half a dozen men who would have been passionately glad to marry Rose Franklin: Rose, splendid in mind as well as in body. She bore the impress of her pioneer mother who had been fearless and thoughtful, and who had taken on, with other women of her day, the responsibility not only of bearing children but of bearing commonwealths, as well.

She moved slowly along the street, looking about her with interest, until Bodie pulled impatiently at her hand. "Rose, I'm hungry. My stomach feels naked."

"Don't whine," said Rose. "You insisted on seeing the town before breakfast."

"But the town's awful long for such a little town and I thought it wouldn't take you so long to dress and——"

"Good heavens, Bodie! If it's as serious as all that, we'll go directly back to breakfast."

"There's father, now, on the hotel steps,"

said the boy. "Look, Rose! There's a man with him that's taller than he is. I thought father was the tallest man in the world."

"That's Mr. Lincoln. I'm glad he's come!" exclaimed Rose, quickening her pace. "I want to ask him something."

"Who's Mr. Lincoln?" whined Bodie. "I can't go so fast. It makes my stomach growl. I wish my legs were as long as yours."

"Mr. Lincoln's a friend of father's." Rose's voice was patient. "He's only a country lawyer but he's a very smart politician and you must be polite to him."

"I wish father was a politician instead of just an editor, then he'd have his picture in the paper like—" began Bodie.

But Rose was not heeding the child. She again quickened her pace, as her father turned into the hotel and Mr. Lincoln moved slowly down the steps.

"Mr. Lincoln!" she called.

The tall man paused and as Rose came up,

a little breathless, he removed his high hat and smiled.

"If the Illinois Central trains had your speed, Miss Rose, that Chicago special wouldn't be two hours late, this morning!"

The dimples flashed at the corners of Rose's mouth. "Poor Bodie finds my speed much less enjoyable than train speed!"

Mr. Lincoln looked down at the panting youngster. "So this is Ichabod's boy! Nice new suit you've got, son!"

"Velvet!" snarled Bodie, with the startling effect of an oath. "Wish I was dead!"

Lincoln chuckled, dug a copper from his pocket and handed it to Bodie. "Get yourself some hoarhound drops, son, and forget your clothes. That's my method."

Bodie took the copper and flew along the street to a grocery store whose proprietor was just opening his door for the day. Rose spoke in a low voice.

"Mr. Lincoln, has father said anything to

you of the trouble between him and Owen Bashford?"

The lawyer shook his head. "No! Of course, I know they're always fighting each other through their two papers."

"It's worse than that now!" exclaimed Rose. "It used to be only the usual enmity between Democrat and Whig. But you know Owen is a Stephen A. Douglas man. Day before yesterday, in Chicago, there was an indignation meeting of citizens over the attack in the Senate on Charles Sumner. . . . Surely, Mr. Lincoln, Congressman Brooks will be punished for that!"

Mr. Lincoln looked troubled. He shook his great head slowly. "It's hard to tell. Sumner himself will be the best judge of that, when he recovers from the beating, if he ever does. Adequate punishment of Brooks might set the whole South on fire."

"Let it!" exclaimed Rose, her dark eyes flashing. Then she returned to the object of

her interview. "That was a wild meeting, Mr. Lincoln. Father and Owen Bashford led opposing sides. Father was for forbidding any member of the Democratic party who did not declare himself against Brooks to come to this anti-Nebraskan convention. That made Owen furious and their arguing really broke up the meeting."

Mr. Lincoln looked troubled. "Your father has been talking to me of the same thing but he didn't speak of Owen with particularity, knowing, of course, how fond I am of the boy. I think I've beguiled your father from the thought of bringing up the Brooks attack at the convention to-day. This is a convention to unite all parties in a stand against slavery. The whole point of the gathering is to avoid party strife. I think your father sees that now." The lawyer looked at Rose keenly but with a little smile. "Does that remove your fears?"

"It—it at least makes me more hopeful,"

replied Rose. "I—I hesitate to say it, but you will understand, I'm sure. I can't help feeling that, almost unconsciously to himself, father's feeling against Owen's politics is made violent mostly because of the friendship between Owen and me. I don't think that even if Owen turned Whig, which he never will, father would soften toward him."

"We'll turn both Owen and your father into this new party, the Republican party. It's a good name."

"If we only could!" exclaimed Rose. "But so far their differences are irreconcilable."

"And a reconciliation would mean a great deal to you, Miss Rose?" asked Lincoln, gently.

Rose met his deep-set gaze squarely. "Yes, Mr. Lincoln." Then she added with a sudden, almost childish trembling of her delicate lips, "But I've almost given up hope!"

"Oh, don't say that!" cried Mr. Lincoln.

"You are too young to say that! Leave hopelessness to old fellows like me."

"You! Why, Mr. Lincoln, we all feel that you are just beginning your career. I'm expecting to address you as Senator Lincoln in the not distant future."

Lincoln shook his head slowly, but before he could speak, Bodie ran up, a long brown stick of candy protruding from his mouth. His nose had been bleeding.

"I had a fight with the grocer's boy," he explained, thickly. "He said these were girl's pants. After the fight, his father gave me three sticks of hoarhound for the penny."

Mr. Lincoln laughed delightedly. "And then what happened?"

"Oh, him and me are going fishing, if Rose will let me."

Rose smiled as she took a grimy little hand in hers. "Let's have breakfast first. Will you not share it with us, Mr. Lincoln?"

"Oh, I ate an hour ago!" replied the law-

yer. "I'll see you later." He swung into his long stride, down the street, and Rose led her little brother into the dining-room of the hotel.

Ichabod Franklin was sitting alone at a small table. He was writing on a reporter's pad and did not look up until Rose and Bodie had finished eating their cornmeal mush. Then he raised his head and gazed at Rose abstractedly. It was a heavily masculinized edition of his daughter's head, the black hair shot with gray, a deep line extending from the corner of either nostril to the corners of the mouth.

"Chicago train is late, I hear," he said. "I'm glad we came down last night."

Rose nodded. Bodie looked at his father without speaking. It was characteristic of the relations of the two that the little boy did not mention the fight that he had boasted of to his sister.

"Is Mr. Lincoln going to speak to-day?" asked Rose.

"No! He said there were so many other speakers he wouldn't be needed. I think he's wise. He's a good country lawyer but as a politician he lacks polish. He wouldn't get far with the sort of men who are coming to this convention."

Rose moved impatiently. "You underestimate Mr. Lincoln, father."

"Not at all. There's no man in Illinois I like more or have a higher opinion of in an advisory capacity. But he's been trying to get somewhere, politically, for a long time and he's never gotten anywhere. He's too easy going."

"Yet you take his political advice! Father, he has a great character!"

"Pshaw! More of your unaccountable hero worship," returned her father irritably.

"Bodie, leave the table, sir!"

Bodie, who had been concentrating quietly

on measuring the capacity of his mouth by ascertaining the amount of biscuit he could cram into it, jumped so hastily from his chair that he choked and deposited the mouthful of biscuits on his father's black broadcloth sleeve. Ichabod Franklin's wild temper flared. He sprang to his feet with an oath that paralyzed traffic in the dining-room, seized Bodie by the ear and led him from the room. Rose stared after them, scarlet faced, then with obvious effort went on with her coffee.

Ichabod returned shortly. "You spoil that brat, Rose," he snarled.

"He has no mother," replied Rose in a low voice. "He hasn't even the memory of her, as I have. She would have been gentle with him. The thing that I fear is that, looking so much like you, I may, as I grow older, develop, too, your irascible disposition. If that should happen, life would be a pretty unhappy affair for Bodie."

Ichabod stared at Rose, the great veins on his forehead swelling. "You are impertinent, Madam."

"No, father! Pardon me! I'm twenty-eight and merely losing the capacity for hero worship you accuse me of. You'll never have a more ardent admirer of yourself as a great newspaper editor than I am. But——"

"But what?" snapped Ichabod.

"But you are letting your irritability hamper your career. And you are making a little boy unhappy."

"Owen Bashford, on the other hand," growled Ichabod. "The blank—blank is a paragon of sweet temper."

"He's even tempered when he doesn't discuss politics with you," returned Rose. "What did you do with Bodie, father?"

"I sent him to his room. Don't go up there and coddle him. And for God's sake, take that velvet suit off him. He looks like a girl!"

The dimples appeared at the corners of Rose's mouth as she thought of Mr. Lincoln's genial disapprobation of Bodie's suit which, enhancing the boy's beauty as it did, she hadn't the slightest intention of discarding. But before she could reply to her father there was a commotion in the lobby and a group of frock-coated men filed into the dining-room. The Chicago train had arrived. Ichabod Franklin scanned the entering faces eagerly.

"They're all here, by Jove! This is throwing down the gauntlet to Douglas with a vengeance! And there's some of the state crowd: Selby and Davis and Buck and Ex-Governor Reeder!"

The editor rose, with a fine smile illuminating his brown eyes and the entering delegates surged toward him. Ichabod was the rallying point for the Illinois Whigs and men gladly recognized this while shrugging

their shoulders at his distempers. In a moment, tables had been shoved up to lengthen the Franklin table and ten or twelve men were calling for breakfast, while they answered Ichabod's staccato fusillade of questions.

"Where is Owen Bashford?" asked Rose. "Oh, there he is!" answering her own question as a tall, slender man of perhaps thirty-five appeared in the door. Impulsively, Rose beckoned to him. Owen advanced, smiling. He was as fair as Bodie, but with a hawk-like aquilinity of feature the little boy never would have. His eyes, very blue and very intelligent, were fastened on Rose.

"How are you, Rose?" he asked, shaking hands.

"Sit down, Bashford!" cried the delegate from Jacksonville. "Room for one more!"

"One moment, please," exclaimed Ichabod. "Bashford, have you decided to re-

pudiate Brooks and declare that the attack was inexcusable?"

"Franklin!" exclaimed a man, with a white beard, "I beg of you, let that matter drop! You are jeopardizing a very great affair by your attitude. We all know Bashford's stand against slavery and we all recognize the enormous influence of his newspaper. We need him at this convention."

Rose, with a little nod of approval, turned to Owen Bashford, with a deep, tender look. Ichabod saw that look and brought his fist down on the table.

"Gentlemen, I await the courtesy of a reply from Mr. Bashford."

Owen lifted his chin a little. He spoke with a slight drawl for which his Virginia mother may have been responsible.

"Charles Sumner practically called Brooks' uncle a skunk in a speech that was filled with studied insult for all the Southern

congressmen. It was a speech containing more exquisite indelicacies than any that Sumner, with all his proficiency in that line, ever has attempted before. The very men who scorn what they call Abe Lincoln's coarseness, hold Sumner's refined insolence up to praise. For myself, I prefer Lincoln's method. Sumner deserved punishment, but Brooks' methods were unfair and too rough. Both men should apologize, Brooks for the brutality of his arm and Sumner for the brutality of his tongue."

Again Rose nodded and as again Ichabod saw the approbation in his daughter's face, he rose, leaned across the little table that separated him from Owen and struck him on the chin. It was a heavy blow. For a moment there was utter silence in the dining-room. Even the waitresses, with their noisy movements of raw country girls, were still.

It was Owen Bashford who broke the silence. "But, Mr. Franklin," he drawled,

"this puts you in the class with Brooks, does it not?"

"Come out and fight, you hybrid Democrat, you!" shouted Ichabod.

Half a dozen hands seized him, as he again lunged at the motionless Owen. Rose, now on her feet, looked wildly from her father's face to Owen's. She knew that it was her presence beside the younger editor which was driving her father to this unprecedented excess, but she hesitated to seem to run away. It was Bodie who offered her a solution. A chambermaid, who had not witnessed the episode, hurried up to Rose.

"Your little brother's yelling bloody murder for you," she said in a whisper that carried across the dining-room. "He's disturbing all the folks that ain't out of bed yet."

Rose turned quickly from the embattled breakfast table and made her way up to Bodie's room. The little boy was sitting on the edge of his bed, howling with all the

abandon of a disconsolate puppy. Rose closed the door after her and taking Bodie's hand, she led him to a rocking chair beside the window. She caught a towel from the washstand as she passed. Bodie, big boy as he was, snuggled gratefully on her lap when she had seated herself and gently began to wipe his face. She did not speak, until his wild weeping had given way to an occasional sob.

"There, dear! Feel better?" she asked.

"How would you feel if your ear had been pulled out by the roots?" demanded Bodie. "I hate him, the old black pirate!"

"No! No! No! Bodie, you must not speak so of him. He's your father."

The child's chin quivered. "Well, he never pulled your ear. You said mother wouldn't let him. The great, big, old bully, picking on a little boy! How did I know the old biscuits would fly that way? I had a right to see how much I could chew at once,

didn't I? Or aren't my teeth mine, either?"

Rose gathered the boy to her shoulder, rested her cheek against his hair and began to rock.

"Mother loved him, Bodie, oh, so much! She looked on his temper as his affliction, like heart disease would be or consumption. You look very like her. I suppose every time he sees you, he's reminded over again of his terrible loss. For he'll never get over missing her. Just think! He's the greatest editor west of the Alleghanies and she will never, never know it. Poor father!"

Bodie was tall and precocious for eight, yet he snuffled like a very little boy and buried his cheek deeper on his sister's shoulder. "Tell me some more," he said huskily. "It makes my throat stop aching."

"When I was little like you," Rose went on, "father lost his temper with me and mother came into the room just as he was going to whip me. And Mother just put her

hand on his arm and said, 'Ichabod, you are ill again!' And father dropped his cane and stared at her and finally he said, 'Yes, Isabel, God forgive me, I'm ill again!' . . . You see, Bodie, when God took her away He took from father his very mainstay."

The child did not speak for a moment, then he asked, "Why did God take her away?"

"I don't know, unless He thought life was too hard for her. She was not strong. I think, even though she loved father so deeply, she was glad to go where there was perfect peace."

"You're like mother, Rose, aren't you?"

"No, I'm like father, only so far I've had enough of mother's strength to make me able to fight down my temper. You are like mother. You see, Bodie, father has tremendous cares on his shoulders. America is in trouble."

The boy sat erect. "America's in trouble? What do you mean, Rose?"

Rose looked at her small brother thoughtfully. "I don't think I can make you understand it all, Bodie. But men like father and Mr. Lincoln and Mr. Bashford are afraid that the North and the South will quarrel so over slavery that America will be hurt, terribly hurt. Perhaps, fall apart like a house shaken by an earthquake. Father, your own father, Bodie, got the idea of calling together several hundred men in Illinois who love America as he does and who don't want slavery and who can make their neighbors think as they do. He wants them to form a huge party to fight against slavery and to keep America from falling apart. And that's why we have come down from Chicago and why all those splendid men have come to Bloomington, to carry out father's idea. His idea might save the nation if enough states took it up. Think of that, Bodie! Poor, crazy-tempered father!"

Bodie stared out of the open window. It

was prairie spring without. The street on which the hotel was set ended in endless prairie green—green and still more green. The heavenly scent of it poured in through the window.

“That’s America out there, isn’t it, Rose?” asked Bodie.

“Yes, hundreds of thousands of miles of it. And father carries on his shoulders the weight of feeling that he must save it. That’s rather wonderful, isn’t it, little Bodie?”

As the child nodded silently, there came a rap on the door. “Come in!” called Rose. The door swung open, disclosing Mr. Lincoln and Ichabod Franklin on the threshold. Ichabod stared at the two, in the rocking chair, but before his elders could speak, the little boy slid from his sister’s knee and went quickly up to his father, holding out his hand.

“You see, father,” he said clearly, “I didn’t understand until Rose explained. You

can twist my ear all you want to if it will help you to bear America's troubles."

Ichabod looked at Rose in utter bewilderment. She spoke quickly. "You've forgotten that you punished him, father, for coughing all over your coat."

"Oh! I remember clearly enough now. Don't let it happen again, sir!"

Rose thrust Bodie toward the door. "You can go over and play with the grocer's boy until I call for you, Bodie."

Mr. Lincoln spoke for the first time. "In the handsome velvet suit?"

"I'm not going to take it off for him!" replied Bodie. "I've got him licked." He bolted from the room.

"Mr. Lincoln wants to talk to you, Rose," said Ichabod, abruptly. "I've told them to keep the little parlor at the end of the hall clear for you."

Rose moved toward the door. "You are coming with us, father?"

"No, I have other matters—in my room."

Rose led the way to the parlor, her face filled with anxiety. Mr. Lincoln seated her, then walked slowly up and down the room. "Miss Rose, how did you beguile the little boy into an apology?"

"I didn't want him to apologize, Mr. Lincoln, I wanted him to forgive. I want Bodie not to have an unhappy childhood and—and—he's growing to hate father. So I explained to him the very big things father is doing."

The lawyer nodded. "You did a good job. I remember your mother. She had that same power. Miss Rose, you'll have to use it again, I think. Your father, by his action to Bashford just now, has roused all the partisan bitterness that we'd hoped to dissolve, by this convention. He's hurt his leadership so that some of the best men say they won't stay to be led by a man who could say and do what he did to Owen Bashford. It's very

bad! . . . Miss Rose, this convention must not fail."

"What can I do?" asked Rose.

"I hesitate to ask you. But from what you told me yourself and from what your father's friends and yours tell me, I must believe that much of Ichabod's enmity toward Owen is based on his jealousy of your friendship for Owen. If your father could receive a promise from you that you would give up Owen——"

Mr. Lincoln paused. Rose whitened. "You are asking me to make father a promise that— Mr. Lincoln, does Owen know of this?"

"No," said the lawyer. "Neither your father nor Owen know, but if you make that promise I shall ask them to abide by it."

Rose drew herself slowly from her chair and stood facing Mr. Lincoln. The lawyer, preoccupied as he was, gave her a glance of appreciation. She was, indeed, a splendid

looking woman : her massive head, her broad shoulders, her slender waist, her sweeping skirts. Here was a presence, he thought, that royalty might envy. She twisted her hands together until the knuckles cracked.

"It's too much," she said brokenly. "That I cannot do."

"You are very sure, Miss Rose? Take time. It is a momentous decision. The fate of the nation may hinge on this convention."

"It's too much," repeated Rose. "I haven't Bodie's forgiving disposition. Friendship after friendship, his temper or his jealousy has broken. But they were only friendships. This—this feeling between Owen and me—Mr. Lincoln, did you—no, you never could have felt to any woman as I do to Owen or you would not ask me to destroy that feeling."

Mr. Lincoln's sallow face suddenly became livid. "You can say that? Although it was common talk that I almost lost my mind when

Ann Rutledge was laid in her grave! . . .
Do I not know?"

"And would you have given her up for such a reason?" cried Rose.

Lincoln turned his gaunt face toward the window and again Rose followed another's gaze out to the green of the prairies that pressed upon the little town. Again she was conscious of the May wind drenched with the nameless sweetness of the plains.

"I don't know," replied the lawyer, slowly. "I pray God that I could have, had the need arisen. And equally I thank Him that the choice was not forced upon me. And yet, I'm counting on your strength, Miss Rose. And on your knowledge. No man in Illinois knows better than you the awful need of the hour."

"It's not fair! It's not right!" Rose's voice was as low as Mr. Lincoln's, but where his was sad, hers was vehement. "Natures like my father's—that give to the world while

they draw from the family like—like leeches! Must one give one's last drop of blood to them?"

"I think so," replied Mr. Lincoln, carefully. "I have found it to be so."

"I cannot do it!" panted Rose, never raising her voice and never ceasing to twist her long, fine hands together.

"By sheer force of intellect," the quiet man went on, "your father has made himself the leader of the best minds in the West. Miss Rose, I am full of uneasy foreboding. Unless the men, who are against slavery, cease quarreling among themselves, we face national disaster. Your father must change his stand on Owen Bashford or he loses his leadership of this convention, and I know of no man to take his place."

"You could take it, Mr. Lincoln!" exclaimed Rose.

"No! I haven't your father's education.

And this is a convocation of the kind of men who are moved by the educated intellect."

Rose stared at the man, moved as she always was by his gentle persistence.

"But, Mr. Lincoln! To give up Owen! What of him, with his splendid brain and great promise of future leadership? Don't you know that what you are asking me to do will blast his life for years to come?"

"If his private griefs impair his sense of public duty, then he's——"

Rose interrupted. "Then he's no better than my father, you would say! And I—I, too, am of the same kind!"

"Tarred with the same stick!" Mr. Lincoln smiled a little, but his searching gaze did not lift from Rose's face.

"But life must not do this to me!" breathlessly. "I am twenty-eight. I shall not love again. And as far as I know, I have but the one life to live. Living with father, without

my mother, has been one long punishment. I wanted Owen. Oh, I wanted him!"

The lawyer turned from his deep contemplation of the tragic face before him to gaze again upon the prairies. His own lips were quivering but he did not speak.

"And Owen, himself!" panted Rose. "The kind of man who would love me cannot do so lightly. And I am to crucify him then——?"

Mr. Lincoln cleared his throat. "Do you know of any other appeal that would move Ichabod?"

Rose stood, in silence, looking back through the years, facing once and for all what she had learned about bad temper in human beings. And she realized that no appeal to her father regarding his temper would move him. To Ichabod, his loss of self-control was always righteous indignation. She stood silent so long that Mr. Lincoln began to pace the floor again. Rose

spoke in a startled voice, as if she could not believe her own conclusion.

"I'll see what I can do with father."

Mr. Lincoln came slowly toward her, his face flushed in sympathy with her pallor. "And having reached so great a decision, I know that you will carry it out with as much adroitness as you showed in handling Bodie. . . . It's not for me to thank you, Miss Rose, that's in the hands of the God of Nations. Only," he placed a great hand on either of Rose's fine shoulders, "will you not let me say that I have found that the only real satisfaction in one's life comes not from personal joys, but from— Ah, Miss Rose! Miss Rose! I know all that you are suffering! All!"

He turned hastily away, picked up his high hat and left the room.

Rose looked out at the prairie. "God, You help me," she whispered. Then, after a moment's deep breathing of the fragrant May

wind, she went down the hall to her father's room.

He was seated at the table, dictating to his secretary. Rose crossed the room swiftly. She felt as if she had been running a long race. "Father, will you ask Arthur to leave us alone for a little while?"

Ichabod looked up, impatiently. "This is important, Rose."

"But this is more important. Don't defer hearing what I have to say, father, please."

Ichabod, with a little scowl, nodded at his secretary, who left the room hastily. Rose sat down in his place opposite her father.

"Mr. Lincoln," she said, "has been talking to me about your position as leader of this convention, father. He feels that you are the only man fitted to weld together the various factions. Of course, many of us have known that, for a long time, but it is a notable thing to have a man like Mr. Lincoln volunteer such a comment."

Ichabod stared at his daughter. "Is that what he was so insistent on seeing you about? He's an adroit politician. I wonder if Mark Antony is growing ambitious and by some method of indirection——"

"No! No! You misjudge him, indeed, father! I asked him point blank if he could pull the convention together. He seemed so worried about it. But he said no, that he lacked the educational qualifications you possess."

"Did he, indeed?" Ichabod looked thoughtful. "Well, he's right. I'm glad he recognizes his own limitations. Lincoln is first rate on the Sangamon and an extremely keen politician. But he's too coarse fibered for large uses. What did he want of you, daughter?"

"Before I answer that, father, let me ask you a question. Are you still worried lest internal quarrels break up the convention?"

"Still worried? Why Rose, where's your

usual acumen? I am distracted with fear lest the new party be still-born. Didn't you understand, this morning, how they are going to use that cursed Sumner-Brooks episode?"

Rose bit her lips, then sat slowly erect. "I've been thinking, father, that with so much at stake, I shall withdraw my friendship for Owen Bashford. I do not know that it will force Owen to change his attitude, but at least it may make you feel—" She paused, astounded by the vivid light that leaped to her father's eyes.

Ichabod leaned across the table. "You will do that? You have that faith in the righteousness of my position?"

Rose nodded.

Her father sprang to his feet. "Rose! Rose! I feel as I've not felt since your mother was with me—that I have the vital backing of my own! Pshaw! I care little now whether Owen retracts his statements or

not. With this knowledge of you behind me, I can move mountains. Ah, Rose! Blood is thicker than water."

Rose was very pale and she did not move until she lifted her head to say, "But, father, Owen has many backers. How will you satisfy them?"

"Oh, I shall withdraw my exactions. I shall be magnanimous."

Rose nodded. "The blow at the breakfast table—did Owen return that after I left?"

"No!" Ichabod's face darkened.

"I think perhaps your magnanimity must extend to an apology for that, father. It would be an example to Brooks and his kind. You see," as Ichabod threw back his head with a jerk, "I look on this as one of the greatest works of your life. As Mr. Lincoln says, it may mean the saving of the nation. The credit will always belong to you and I want history to record against you nothing that can be misinterpreted, to mar your record."

Ichabod's expression gradually lightened. He interrupted Rose to say, "Our private prejudices must give way. Owen Bashford's faction is needed. I shall send him a letter of apology. And, Rose," as she got slowly to her feet, "Rose, my daughter, I have not been altogether blind to your feeling for Owen. I shall make it my duty to make you feel that there has been no real sacrifice."

"Thank you, father," said Rose, dully. "I must go for Bodie." And she left the room on leaden feet.

But she was not to reach her small brother at once, for Owen stood at the door of the little upstairs parlor. He held the door open for her and closed it behind her. His nostrils were pinched, his eyes full of pain.

"Rose! Mr. Lincoln told me! Have you been to your father?"

"Yes!"

"Without first seeing me? Was that fair?"

Had I not the right to question my own death warrant?"

"We think so much alike," replied Rose, slowly, "that I felt you'd understand and submit to the decision."

"You thought that any new party in the world would be worth the sacrifice of you?" Owen moved toward Rose. He was taller than she, a virile, upstanding man, with a fine mouth. There was heartbreak in his voice as he said, "For it is my death warrant!" He put his arms around Rose. She buried her face against his cheek but he turned her lips to his and kissed her. "There! There is my soul, laid on your lips, Rose. It never can return to me. Now, can you give me up?"

Rose did not reply for a moment while she gathered together every force within her. Then she said, "A little while ago, in this room, Mr. Lincoln and I buried Rose Franklin, the person. There's left only Rose

Franklin, the abolitionist. . . . Owen, don't you understand why I did it?"

"Yes, Rose, I understand." The man touched her tortured face with his trembling fingers. "Look at me, Rose! I want to see if the decision is irrevocable."

His eyes grew more haggard as he gazed. "And do you think that I shall tamely submit to this sort of thing from your father?"

"I've given him my word and he's writing you an apology. Owen, if you do not accept that apology, the wrecking of the new party will be on your head."

"In other words," exclaimed Owen, with sudden bitterness, "if I submit, I lose you. If I do not submit, I wreck the convention, become an object of contempt to you and lose you, anyhow! Rose, this is not justice. It is not——"

He turned from her as the door flung open and Bodie entered dangling a fish of about

three inches in length on the end of a string. He was dripping wet and muddy.

"The first one I ever caught, Rose! I brought it to you!"

Before Rose could speak, her father's secretary appeared in the door. "I have a message for you, sir, from Mr. Lincoln. Could you step this way? He is in Mr. Franklin's room with Messrs. Lovejoy and Davis."

Owen drew a long breath. "I'll see you, shortly, Rose, and finish this," he said, and followed Arthur down the hall.

Rose led the excited Bodie to his room, murmuring enthusiastic but mechanical admiration of the fish. She helped him to change from the dripping velvets.

"You come fishing with me, Rose!" he cried. "It beats any old convention!"

"I wish I could, Bodie dear, but I must spend the rest of the day at the hall."

"Well, but Rose," Bodie spoke anxiously,

"I can eat dinner with you, can't I, and supper?"

"Yes, and if you want me, you may come to Major's Hall down the street and someone will find me for you."

Bodie, in a clean linen suit, eyed his sister suspiciously. "Have you been crying, Rose?"

"No, dear!"

"Because if father ever makes you cry, I'm going to do to him what I did to the grocer's boy. Just because I wear velvet pants ain't saying I can't fight or catch fish!" His ferocity of manner combined with his almost girlish beauty amused and charmed Rose, heartsore as she was. She kissed the little boy gratefully. He went on with great vehemence. "And I met Mr. Lincoln outside and he said he felt just like me when he caught his first fish, but that he didn't have on velvet pants. And I told him if he talked about them any more, I'd fight him. And he

said he'd never blame me. He's a nice man. Lots nicer than father, even if father is smarter. I'm going to catch him a fish."

Rose put on her "shepherdess" hat and held out her hand to Bodie. "You can walk with me as far as Major's Hall, then you'll know the way," she said.

All that day, Rose sat in the hall, watching the birth pangs by which a great political party was making its advent into Illinois. What Mr. Lincoln or her father may have said to Owen she did not know, for all that day he did not come near her. And after the first few hours, Rose succeeded in concentrating her mind to some degree on the events in the hall.

As the day wore on, she found something more than personal excitement enthralling her. Ichabod had convinced Rose, months before, as he had convinced the five or six hundred delegates to the convention, that the abolition movement was not mere party cant

but a deep-seated issue involving the very fate of the nation. Rose watched with breathless eagerness for signs of the partisan hostility which had flared so menacingly in the early morning. What means her father used, she did not know, but soothed and secured from jealousy by her promise, he was able to bring remarkable outward harmony into the session of political enemies. There could be no doubt of the earnestness and high purpose of the gathering, now that, moved by the national emergency, Whig and Democrat, Free Soiler, Know-nothing and Abolitionists—the lions and the lambs lay together in apparent amity.

There were many good speeches made: the finest of all, undoubtedly, by Ichabod Franklin, who in asking that the new party be known as the Republican, gave a history of the anti-slavery movement in America that the brilliant Charles Sumner could not have bettered.

And yet——!

And yet, Rose knew, as did her father and every man and woman in Major's Hall, that night, that when the Republican party of Illinois had been born, it had been born dead!

Ichabod had been able to make men see with their minds what to do. He had not been able to make them feel it with their hearts. It was a party without vital impulse, without cohesion, without driving force. As the evening wore on, a curious uncertainty and apprehensiveness settled on the great gathering. This creature, born of the day's travail, never would live to fight the passionate South, and her sacrifice was to prove vain. After all, her father had not been the man to birth this thing. Rose realized this toward the end of the evening, with a sense of impending disaster that was epic in its proportions. But, she whispered to herself, the convention must not fail! It must not!

A delegate from one of the border counties

was telling of the sacking of Lawrence, Kansas, by guerrilla posses. Rose turned impatiently from his spread-eagle eloquence and stooped over Bodie, who lay asleep with his golden head in her lap.

"Bodie," she whispered, "Mr. Lincoln is in the back of the hall by the door. Will you ask him to come here to me?"

Bodie rubbed his sleepy eyes with a clenched fist from which protruded a fish's silvery tail. "I'll give him the minnie I caught for him," he murmured.

In an astonishingly short time he was back, clinging to Mr. Lincoln's great hand. The lawyer dropped into Bodie's seat and held the child between his knees. The fish lay in one huge outspread palm.

"Mr. Lincoln," said Rose, softly, "if they call you, speak!"

"Nothing can rouse this corpse," returned Mr. Lincoln. "It's as dead as this little fish."

"You can rouse it. If the people call you,

reply to them! Won't you? Have you, by any chance, outlined something?"

Lincoln nodded. "I've thought for weeks of what ought to be said. I've nothing written, though."

"If they call for you, will you speak?" insisted Rose.

"Only if the call is general. Don't you see that otherwise it would be wasted effort?"

"Yes, I do," agreed Rose. "Will you return to the back of the hall now, Mr. Lincoln?" She put her hand on his arm in apology for the request.

Mr. Lincoln nodded as simply as did Bodie at his sister's requests. He looked down at the very defunct fish in his palm, then at Bodie, leaning against his great knee.

"Isn't it a Jim Dandy?" whispered the little boy, slipping an arm around the lawyer's neck.

"It's more than that," replied Mr. Lincoln, soberly. He shook his head over the fish,

then solemnly slipped it into his pocket. Bodie gave a wriggle of satisfaction and Mr. Lincoln kissed the child's round cheek, and with a nod to Rose, returned to the back of the hall.

A moment later, the delegate from the border county finished his speech, and in the burst of applause that followed, Rose stood erect. Her commanding presence, her splendid look received instant attention. She raised her hand.

"I want to hear Abraham Lincoln speak!" she cried.

There was a moment's silence, while the delegates swung to her suggestion, then a man shouted, "Lincoln! Abe Lincoln!"

A hundred voices took up the cry. Five hundred voices joined in. Rose sank into her place, with a sigh, as the tall figure strode down the aisle.

He paused as if to speak from the floor.

"Get up on the platform, Lincoln," roared someone, "and tell us——"

A still greater voice drowned the other. "Speak to us. Tell us, Watchman, what of the night!"

"Watchman, what of the night?"

The phrase caught the imagination of the crowd and it was repeated in breathless anxiety as Lincoln mounted the platform and stood for a moment waiting for silence. . . .

Ah, well! How shall one describe what Lincoln said? It was sixty-seven years ago that he made this, the greatest speech of his life. Men still live who, as adolescent boys, heard him that May evening in Bloomington. They say that, that night, standing on that platform, the beauty of his utterances was only equaled by the inspired beauty of his face! That he spoke like a god, moved by the supernatural.

His face was pale. His great eyes burned black fire. His voice, which sometimes had

been called too harsh, deepened and enveloped the great room in thundering organ notes. His audience, always glad to be amused and touched by one of Honest Abe's homely speeches, sat for the first few moments stunned by the transfiguration of the plain country lawyer into something greater than they readily could conceive.

He moved toward the front of the platform, his hands on his hips, and there was not a man who saw him who did not realize that here was a human being actuated by an overwhelming responsibility to the nation. He spoke for an hour and a half. At the end of the first five minutes, reporters dropped their pencils, absorbed by the passion of the orator. At the end of the first three-quarters of an hour, the reporters, with the rest of the audience, had risen from their seats and when Lincoln, his great arms lifted above his head, made a last appeal to the greatness of men's souls to stand against the

break-up of the nation, his audience, pale of face, with tear-drenched eyes, had pressed forward from their places so that they made a solid human mass about the platform. And, as he ceased to speak, they burst forth in applause that was half worship, seized upon him and carried him to their hearts.

The new party had been born anew, its factions welded by tears.

Rose, clasping her little brother with one arm, pressed forward with the rest, her very soul lifted from her body. As Lincoln finished his peroration, she found her father beside her, his face drawn, tears streaming unchecked from his dark eyes.

‘Yes! Yes!’ she heard him sob. “Yes! Yes! This speech will stay the hand of civil war.”

Rose slipped her hand through her father’s. “I must thank him,” muttered Ichabod. “He has done the impossible.

The Republican party lives and breathes and——”

“Let’s go back to the hotel,” said Rose, “and talk to him there. It will be impossible to get near him here for a long time.”

Ichabod was too profoundly moved to come back to normal at once. He stood running his hands through his hair and repeating phrases from Lincoln’s speech. Rose had not seen him so moved since the night her mother died. Suddenly he turned to her.

“I misjudged him!” he exclaimed. “Lincoln is a great man. He can do anything. I shall do for him whatever he asks. A man who can speak like that! By the eternal fathers, he has kindled a torch to-night that shall flare higher and higher, till it lights the world.”

Men who could not reach Mr. Lincoln began to come up to congratulate Ichabod. He was strangely humble and told one after another that it had not been at his suggestion

that Rose had called for Lincoln. The credit was hers.

"Then your daughter has put the country very deeply in her debt," said one man. "This party owes to her an inspiration that should carry it through a century of politics. I was glad to see Owen Bashford subdued and in line to-day."

Ichabod, still in the exalted mood begot by the speech, turned to Rose. "That, too, was my daughter's work!" Rose gave her father a strange look. In spite of the feeling roused in her by Mr. Lincoln's oratory, she was acutely conscious of the death-like pain in her heart. Ichabod caught the look. "You are glad now of the sacrifice, are you not, Rose?"

Rose, the weary Bodie leaning heavily against her, replied brokenly, "Was it a necessary sacrifice, father? Now, still with the sound of Mr. Lincoln's great plea in your

ears for devotion to human happiness—was it a necessary sacrifice?”

Ichabod stood staring at his daughter from the fine heights to which Lincoln had lifted him. Rose, for once, saw him as she thought her mother must once have idealized him, with a nobility of soul equal to the brilliancy of his mind.

“Do you think that it was not necessary, Rose?”

“I know it was not,” she replied brokenly.

“And do you think,” cried Ichabod, “that I can do less for the party than you, or—or—or my deadliest rival?”

He whirled suddenly and crossed the side to where Owen Bashford stood with a group of friends. Ichabod held out his hand to the younger editor. “Sir,” he said, “do you realize that it was my daughter who put Mr. Lincoln on that platform this evening?”

Very reluctantly Owen took the proffered hand. “We all realize that, sir!”

"Then we owe to her," continued Ichabod, "the fact that we've seen the first great blow struck at slavery. That speech, Mr. Bashford, has made me feel very small, very petty. I wish to bury all my private strifes. Will you accept my friendship, sir, public and private?"

Owen's group gasped. Nothing could have so assured them of the quality of Mr. Lincoln's speech as the effect it was showing on the bitter and brilliant Ichabod Franklin. Owen, whose tear-stained cheeks did not detract from his dignity, bowed over the hand which still clung to his. Ichabod, with heaven knows what sudden cognizance of the grief his selfishness had caused, cleared his throat.

"Come, Owen," he said, huskily, "come over to Rose."

And Rose, watching the conversation she could not hear, clung trembling to Bodie as

she saw the two approach her. Her father was smiling.

"Rose, here's our friend Owen. I'm asking him to take you and Bodie back to the hotel."

Bodie showed sudden interest in life. "Say, he made that speech with the fish I gave him in his pocket. I'll get you one to-morrow, father."

"If it will do for me—" Ichabod suddenly interrupted himself to catch at the sleeve of one of his own reporters. "Cooper! Are your notes complete? We must print that speech without a single omission."

Cooper blinked at his chief with bloodshot eyes. "But—but Mr. Franklin, I couldn't take notes listening to that!"

"What do you mean, sir?" roared Ichabod.

"What I say," replied Cooper with a gulp. "There isn't a reporter here who took down that speech!"

"Where's Hartopp, my correspondent?" exclaimed Owen.

"Over yonder," said Cooper.

"Get all the newspaper men together at the hotel at once," snapped Ichabod. "Rose, your memory is excellent. Come along."

He dashed out into the night. Rose and Owen followed, leading the comatose Bodie between them. They had not exchanged a word. It was not necessary. The very prairie stars above them sang the ecstasy in their hearts.

When they reached the hotel, the effort to recapture the speech began. But it was a vain hunt. Mr. Lincoln could not recall what he had said. Entirely exhausted, he took a solitary walk under the stars and went to his bed. No one in the audience had set down the speech. It was lost to the world forever.

It had reconciled the irreconcilable. It had in very truth, as history has proved, lighted the torch that was to flare round the

world. Its passion, its tragic beauty, its noble inspirations had breathed life into the dead souls of men. Then it had disseminated itself into the common air and men were to hand it on to posterity only in a phrase, the Lost Speech.

In despair, Ichabod and Owen finally sent their reporters away to set down such phrases as they could recall or rescue from other minds. Ichabod began to transcribe his own recollections and Owen departed to do likewise. He followed Rose down the hall and drew her for a moment into the little parlor.

Dawn was lifting across the eastern plains. The two stood for a long moment, arms entwined, eyes on the unspeakable beauty of the prairie distances. Then, without a word, Owen drew Rose into his arms and kissed her with passionate devotion. And then, still without a word, they parted for what remained of the night.







